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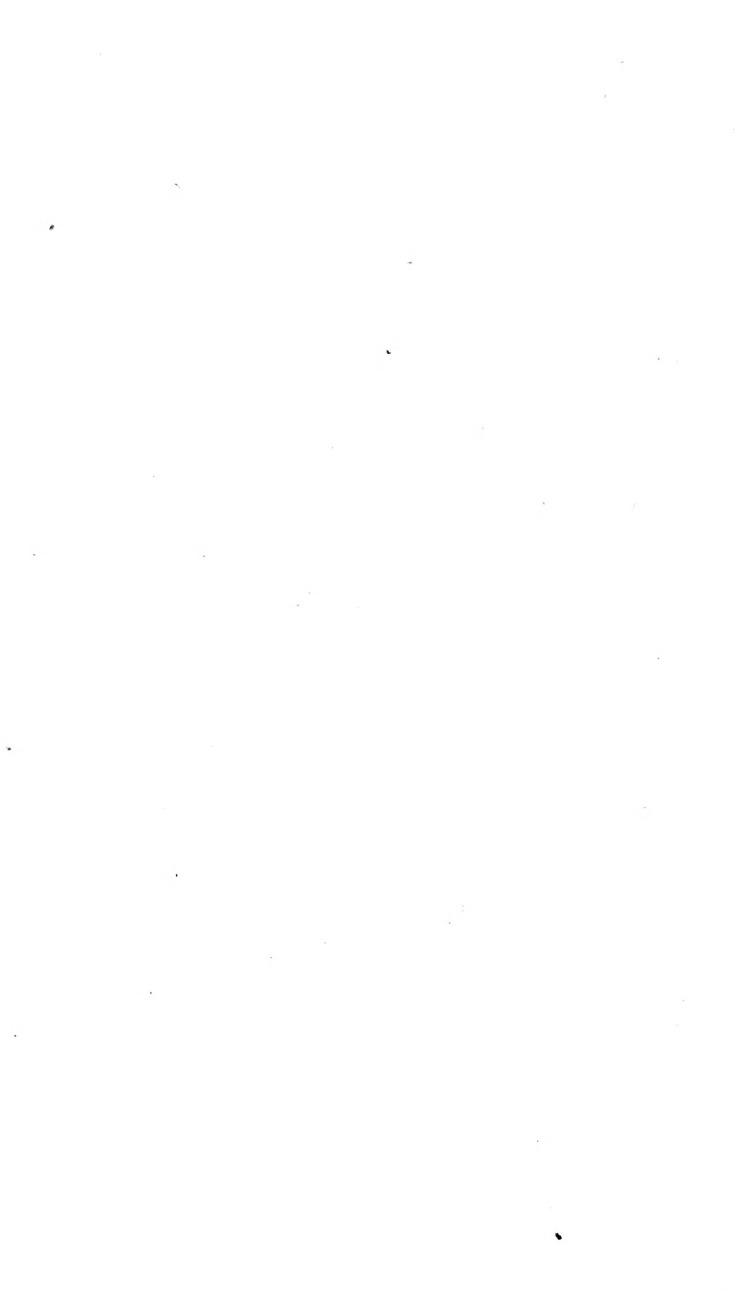
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SKETCHES

OF A

SEA PORT TOWN.

BY

HENRY F. CHORLEY.

“ Thou lovest the woods, the rocks, the quiet fields,
But tell me, if thou canst, enthusiast wan,
Why the broad town to thee no gladness yields?
If thou lov'st nature, sympathize with man—
For he and his are parts of nature's plan.”

The Author of Corn Law Rhymes.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.)

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HENRY F. CHORLEY.

P R E F A C E.

A BOOK like the following might, and *should* have been presented to the public without the ceremony (like most other ceremonies, wearisome) of a preface, did I not feel it almost incumbent upon me to say a few words : they shall, however, be as few as possible.

In the first place, some may imagine that I have drawn the personages who figure in my sketches from real individuals. To such I would simply state the fact that these volumes were written in the expectation of their being published, with my name as their author, while I was yet residing in the place, among the inhabitants of which alone I could be suspected of having found my originals. I hope that this assertion is sufficient to sa-

tisfy any one that such *could not* have been my purpose. Secondly, some may consider that I have used a certain personal pronoun overmuch. I must beg of them to believe that I have no more written in my own individual person than I have made free with the characters of my neighbours ;—to bear in mind that the style of description which has been attempted, offers temptation, more than any other, for an author to invest himself with a fictitious nature, and to give utterance to, and work out the fancies belonging to the character he has assumed. This has not been done without the example of many whose names it would be thought a presumption to associate with my own : but I trust, like them, to be allowed the full benefit of the privilege.

LONDON, June 1st, 1834.

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SKETCHES
OF A
SEA PORT TOWN.

THE STREETS, No. 1.

CHARACTERS.

THERE is pleasure for the eye everywhere, if it have once learned the wholesome lesson of condescending to objects in detail, as well as comprehending them in the gross. Even whilst travelling along the flattest turnpike road, on the noon of a dusty breathless July day, you may often be refreshed by catching a peep of some small fresh garden full of bay trees and roses. It is in the barrenest moorland districts that you meet those rich distances empurpled with

heath, so impossible to be painted, but so delicious to be gazed upon. Has not Paul Potter composed fair landscapes from the canals and pollards of his own land, and Moreland painted absolute romances of ruined sheds and farm-yards, which *cognoscenti* will tell you are beyond all price?—Well then, there is beauty every where,—ay—even in the bird's eye view of our Sea Port Town.

Yes; though the one whereof I treat boasts hardly one vestige of antiquity; though its streets are so much alike as to be a cause of considerable bewilderment to country strangers;—I do maintain, that, seen from the landward, it has its attractions as a landscape, even if we cast out of the account the noble river emptying its waters into the sea, which forms such a prominent feature in the back ground. I have stood on the top of the hill beneath which it is built, and looked with pleasure at its prospects of roofs and chimneys. Come and stand beside me, ye who are sceptical—take the clusters of buildings of unequal height in place of clumps of trees,—the perspective openings of streets for glades,—the

domes of churches, etc., for hills :—give to these the advantage of the many shades of colour wherewith Time knows how to beautify even brick walls and slate roofs ;—remark the sunshine glistening upon distant windows—the passing shades of smoke,—for, start not,—there is beauty in the densest volume of that calumniated vapour, which ever coiled itself out of a manufactory chimney,—and you have formed a picture of some variety at least, I would boldly say, of some interest.

But my familiar friends the Streets have a further value, as being the fields where unceasing amusement and food for thought may be gathered. To reap the full advantage of these, however, you must be a zealous pedestrian at all hours, and through all weathers :—you must cast in your lot among the market carts and schoolboys in the morning, as well as among the frock coats and feathers in the afternoon ; you must waive dignity and walk to your *soirée* at night, and from it again at midnight : and if you have any power of observing what is around you, and any disposition to derive pleasure from the same, you will

experience for yourselves the truth of a maxim, which I once heard a young lady deliver during a pause in conversation, when a large circle of listeners was waiting for the renewal of a tournament of words between two of the most eloquent talkers whom I ever heard discourse. "The town," said she, in a tone of much composure and authority, "has its pleasures as well as the country, though they differ."

In one respect the promenader of a provincial town has the advantage of him who goes forth to study character on the *pavé* of the metropolis. There cannot be the same separation of classes and callings here, as in a city, where Nobility is ensconced in the court quarter, and Trade buys and sells on the Stock Exchange, and Law takes counsel in his inns of court. Here you will in one moment encounter a group of *native* characters, (I concede the pre-eminence in brilliant exotics to Oxford Street and Piccadilly), as heterogeneous as the articles, which, in an old conundrum, one liquid (ink) is said to have the power of expressing. The knot of people before us is not unworthy of being studied. There is first

the would-be *aristocratess* stepping from her carriage, and carefully refraining from looking around her, dressed in the richest of silks, and the most delicate of laces:—showing in striking contrast with the man who rudely brushes past her, regardless of her pretty displeasure at such a want of proper respect. He is Captain of one of those small traders which every fair wind brings into port in myriads; with a short, thick-set figure,—a tanned face, tarry hands,—boots with abundance of sea room in them, a rolling yet decided step:—the strongest contrast in the world to her of the dainty apparel, slim figure and *sans-souci* carriage.

After him comes one of those itinerants, whose existence upon his trade seems nothing short of marvellous, acknowledged as a nuisance by every one, yet day after day to be seen with the same ragged coat, and brown hat, and slouching gait, and dull physiognomy, *dandering* lazily up and down, and scarcely seeming to have sense or volition enough to support his tray;—one half of which bears a flock of lambs fleeced with shreds of cotton

wool, and mounted upon tin legs; and the other, a fierce array of cocks, as gay as combs of red duffel can make them. How different is such a melancholy figure from one of the wandering Savoyards, those bright eyed, knavish, merry urchins, who, no less ragged, and no more encouraged than the natural history vender aforesaid, carry within them that principle of perpetual gladness which defies hunger, cold, and nakedness. It is next to impossible to speak harshly to one of those varlets, even should he beset you, as I have been beset by a child, scarcely twelve years old, who, on the strength of some penny of other days, was wont to keep up a constant clatter before me, from one end of a long street to the other, in the hope of again attracting my charitable notice. *Kicking* time with his clogs, to the horrible tunes he extorted from his *vielle*, he seemed to enjoy the noise and disturbance he made, and never disheartened by the stony disregardfulness with which I used to stalk along, he would persevere in his importunity, till we reached a certain corner, whence a variety of less-trodden thoroughfares diverged,

where he always left me. I shall never forget the particular "*deil ma care*" sort of fling, with which he used to turn back to torment some other passenger,—in all probability, with as little success. There is that in the nature of an Englishman, which will ever prevent his becoming a *merry* beggar. Our paupers are surly, or shrewd, or sheepish:—but they rarely if ever,—and Heaven forbid that they should learn it!—exhibit that reckless unconcern which seems to make a precarious out-of-doors life, so little of a trial to the children of the South, in spite of our drenching rains and sea-coal fires.

But we are wandering from the streets, when our purpose was to wander *in* them. Next to the toy-merchant comes one of those figures, perhaps of all others the commonest, and yet, belonging to a class in which more is really achieved and endured than in any other. That woman, be sure, has been bred and born to walk;—you may see it by the firm, though ungraceful manner in which she threads her way among the crowd. She is most probably, the daughter of some

lodging-house keeper,—perhaps a small governess;—but that she is accustomed to be much abroad, you may tell at once by her stout shoes, her substantial cloak and bonnet, which, like fortitude, “bids defiance to the winds,”—and this is a spring day, when most of our town birds have already cast off their dingy winter plumage. She has absolutely nothing in her face,—you could never fancy such an one being sought by a lover, or knowing any thing beyond the way to the market and back again; and yet, of all that group before us, she is the person most likely to have a story to tell. How many such a girl has been sought by some heartless scheming fellow, who has deserted her, upon finding her little hoard of savings a few pounds less than his cupidity had resolved it should amount to. She may have a father and brothers far at sea, and though her toil is so unremitting all day, that the sleep of weariness prevents her listening to the wind at night, she may be yet as anxious—though less unhappy, because stronger in spirit,—as any countess of old, whose lover went over seas to fight in Palestine.

She may have left behind her an ailing querulous mother burdened with debt, who relies upon the work of her fingers for present subsistence: or a crew of needy noisy brothers and sisters all to be educated, all to be launched upon their several paths of life,—or a worthless husband, (she is old enough to be a wife)—from whom, alas! she has learned to conceal that she is on her way to some shop or other to be paid for her work; and that one of these trials may appertain to her lot is more than a possibility, though there is no trait either in her dress or demeanour to arrest your eye for one moment. Still, it is impossible to walk through a crowd without speculating upon what may have been the fortunes, what are the inward feelings of those who surround you, and remembering humbly and sadly, how the wisest live among their fellow men, as in a dream.

Another character had well nigh passed unmarked, while we were following that “young person” with our eye and thoughts; — a *bonâ-fide* character, — spencer, pigtail, shovel hat, drab gaiters, and spectacles, all

originals in their way. That man is one of those remains of a former and more quiet world, whom it absolutely startles you to meet in the midst of the bustle and novelty of a town :—one of those inhabitants who remember “ when Queen Street was green fields,” and “ a sycamore grew in the Horse-market,” and “ St. Joseph’s church was quite in the country,” and whose own primitive abode, once the smallest house in a retired and genteel square, is now kept neat with difficulty, in the midst of warehouses, pawnbrokers’ shops, timber yards, and distilleries. Boy and man, that strange yet venerable looking personage has lived under the same roof for seventy years or thereabouts, has gone over much the same ground upon the same days of the week for the last twenty.—He is singular : one glance at the cut of his clothes will show you that,—he is in easy circumstances, for they are new, and of the finest materials :—and he never changes his dress from January to July, except that on very cold mornings, he knots a red silk handkerchief loosely about his throat, and, if the clouds threaten rain,

in the hand which is not hidden under his coat tails, may be seen an antique brown silk umbrella, with a straight handle. His talk suits well with his appearance. He takes off his hat to the few ladies whom he knows, with an air which our half fledged beaux may never hope to equal:—and, with his small news, seasoned with reminiscences of the past, he knows how to mingle compliments so daintily, as to make their frequent use less distasteful than it would be, were they presented less skilfully. He goes on 'Change occasionally, and holds up his hands when he hears the enterprising talk of the political merchants of the present day; and persists—for, though civil, he is pertinacious—that it is impossible they can be making any money. Twice a week he attends prayers at the parish church, and reads the psalms aloud from his large quarto prayer book, like himself, quaintly bound, and, though old, in good preservation. He is never to be seen abroad in the evening—a considerable mystery hanging over the manner in which he passes those hours of the twenty-four; if he is ever tempted forth, it is

to play a quiet rubber with some old crony, or younger neighbour, who is attentive enough to the lonely bachelor to reiterate his invitation, for he does not visit such, without being a little pressed. His nephews and nieces are dead, or live at a distance from him—and his housekeeper, as great an in-doors curiosity as her master is an out-of-doors one, is almost the only person to whom he can say—"Do you remember what happened fifty years ago?" but as they are both of them sparing in speech, this is seldom said, however often recollected. He is now on his way to the news-room which he has so long frequented; and in two minutes more, he will be found in an arm chair and corner so peculiarly his own, that, when he dies, (and from his upright port and elastic tread it may be gathered that he is in no hurry so to do) it would be only justice to carry away the chair, and wall up the corner. No new occupant could satisfy the eye which had once been used to the figure of Mr. Wilkinson.

Close behind him is a foreigner:—a Frenchman—a Gascon, you may know him by the

boastful air of his person, and satisfied, though still restless play of his sallow features. He is a little man, *done up* in a frogged pelisse, for it seems doubtful how he can ever have *got into* it; with an eye like a jet bead, and such a head of hair, as might animate the waxen Adonis in yonder hair-dresser's window, with very envy;—the rest of his appointments corresponding in flash and finish with those already described. A dancing-master at least?—Ay, and a fencing-master, and dealer in Eau-de-Cologne and reticules and perfumes, and lithographs, and a thousand things besides which he imports from his brother's *magasin* in Paris to oblige his fair English friends, who have been pleased to approve of his taste:—he will order for you any thing you please, from a pyramid to a poodle, with the most condescending kindness imaginable, and phrases which it absolutely fertilizes plain men's wits to hear. He was once, a long time ago, honoured by a commission from the lady of the carriage, and you may watch him, some steps before they actually meet, getting up a bow of recognition, with a shrug and a smile intended

to express humility and devotion. Well-a-day! the proud lady does not deign to see him!—and he has no pretext on which to dare a second attempt; so he passes onward, with a quick step, flourishing his silver-tipped rattle in figures which an opera dancer need not disdain to imitate, in the hope of concealing his chagrin.

But, enough for the present, of the streets. We shall be companions, it may be, in future rambles; and again see and hear something which may be chronicled.

THE CAPTAIN'S WIDOW'S TALE.

IT was on one of those still black winter evenings, when the winds are all chained fast, and the atmosphere is so thick that the light of neither moon nor stars can pierce it, and the cold is so intense that few lingerers are to be found in the streets, that a party of young people drew as closely round the fire as their numbers could permit ; so busily engaged in talk, that the waning candles, and the warning fingers of the time-piece were not heeded. One thrilling story had succeeded another ;—the chief narrator being an elderly lady, whose earnest manner, and uncommon appearance commanded attention. You might see that grief had done its work upon her completely—

she never smiled,—and, when silent, her countenance wore the distressed and astray expression of one whose occupation is with memory, and that memory a hoard of griefs. It is wonderful how the young and light-hearted can enjoy to listen to the out-pouring of sad stories,—and how they can find a strange pleasure in hearing of calamities, which, one day or other, may darken their own lot. Our little party sate and listened to her mournful tales with increasing interest; and excited by their heart-felt attention, she became more minute and impressive at every new recital, and as the hour grew later,—until, I verily believe, that there were few among her audience, who would not have started, had they turned round suddenly, and met their dusky and enlarged shadows upon the dim wall behind them.

At length, insatiable as we were, some one of us remembered how delicate was the health of the story-teller, and apologized for keeping her up to such a late hour.

“It is of no consequence,” said she; “my rest was broken years ago, with listening to

the wind, when my husband and sons were at sea ; and I have never recovered it, though I have no one for whose sake to listen now !— I then became so familiar with its tones, that even in my own well-curtained rooms, (and my husband, who knew my anxiety of disposition, had purposely fixed our residence in one of the most sheltered parts of the town) I could tell, by the faint sounds which reached my ear, from what quarter the gale was blowing, and I learned to calculate whereabouts, if at all, it would meet my husband's ship. But we were talking of coincidences—I think I can tell you of as strange a one as ever happened,—if you will call it by such a name—I might perhaps, if I said I thought of it otherwise, expose myself to your mirth ; so we will call it a coincidence.”

We stirred the fire and arranged ourselves anew to listen.

“ It is about fifteen years ago,” she began, “ that Captain Barkholme, a cousin of my husband's, disagreed so violently with his son, that George was compelled to leave home, for peace's sake. Some wondered at this, be-

cause, though the old man was very unreasonable and fierce-tempered, and, as some said, half-crazed with spirit-drinking, and though he had always behaved unjustly and tyrannically towards his children, George had always submitted to his authority with the utmost gentleness. I was not surprised, for I knew the cause of their quarrel. George had privately engaged to marry a young girl, and when their compact was discovered, the old captain broke out into such an outrageous passion, and swore such awful oaths, as have never been heard before or since. He was that sort of man, whom nothing or nobody would please when he was in certain humours, and made no scruple of abusing his daughters in the most shameful manner, when George was at sea,—for the young man, with all his sweetness of temper, had the spirit of a lion, and would not have allowed any one so much as to look angrily upon his sisters, had he known it. I never could hear what was Captain Barkholme's objection to the poor girl:—she was an orphan, the daughter of a sort of country squire, who had once owned a small estate

near Malpas. But times were bad; and her father had lived beyond his income, so that, at his death, his property was sold to pay his debts, and his daughter was glad to take a governess' situation. At the time when George became acquainted with her, she was in Mr. Wells' family. Mr. Wells was the owner of George's ship,—and he approved of the attachment, and promised to do something for the young couple; but the old man, as I said, became frantic when he found it out, perhaps he wished his son to marry elsewhere. However, he made George's home so uncomfortable that he left it,—to come back no more.

“ The poor girl, who was the cause of all this rage, was so terrified by Captain Barkholme's threatening and intemperate language, that she might almost have been persuaded to take any step, if her lover had not been at her side. George's only remaining sister who lived at home, the others being comfortably married, became likewise the victim of her father's passion on this account. The old man was never a very sound sleeper, and after his son's departure, he would get up in the mid-

dle of the night, and wander up and down the house, with a candle in one hand, and a bottle of spirits in the other, swearing most horribly, and muttering about wicked things which he had done when he was off the Gold coast;—his old messmates *did* whisper something about his having flogged a poor black cabin boy to death. However this might be, he never lay down, without a light at his bedside;—and so violent became his threats, that, at last, George determined upon being married before he left port, in the hope that when the step was irrevocably taken, his father would moderate his anger, which could then answer no possible purpose.

“ I had known Mary Anne Parnell's mother well, and was as fond of her as if she had been my own daughter; besides, she was so humble and patient that it was impossible to help loving her. She would often come to me in the evening to talk to me and ask my counsel; and truly, it was a difficult thing to know what to advise, when one of the parties seemed to be so entirely possessed by an evil spirit.—It was on a beautiful October evening,

I remember it well,—that she came to me much later than usual; I had not called for candles, I love twilight so much,—and was sitting over the fire alone. There was light enough, however, to show her tears, and I felt her tremble so violently, that I was compelled to put my arm round her waist, and hold her upon her chair. I took off her bonnet, and soothed her as well as I could, but it was some minutes before she could collect herself sufficiently to speak; at length, she gasped out,—‘ O mamma !’—(for she always called me mamma) ‘ I am going to be married to-morrow !’

“ ‘ To-morrow, my love !—what is the occasion of all this haste ?’

“ ‘ Some sudden business—but I scarcely understand—my head runs round so—the Royal Elizabeth is to go to sea early on Saturday morning, and George will hear of nothing else—and to-morrow Friday too !’—and at this she began to weep. When I prevailed upon her to dry her tears again, she told me farther that Captain Barkholme had broken in upon them, scarce an hour before, and

declared that he would appear at whatever church they went to, and forbid the ceremony's taking place—‘and then the shocking words which he said about *me*,’ continued the agitated girl,—‘the old man cursed so horribly; and George grew very angry—and—I can hardly bear to tell you, they came to blows, though I am sure that George only defended himself as quietly as he could.’

“ ‘And where is George now?’ asked I.

“ ‘Gone for a license; and he says that we are to be married the first thing in the morning—quite early—that his father may not find it out: and that he will explain it to the clergyman—but I feel so terrified—every thing seems against us!’

“ Poor Mary Anne!—she was indeed so thoroughly nervous, that I resolved to keep her with me all night.—She slept with me, or rather we lay down together, for we neither of us slept, though we did not speak. I shall never forget the sadness of heart which came over me, as I felt her tears falling upon my shoulder;—she was of an extremely timid spirit, poor girl! and had always believed

herself to be born to misfortunes. Some fortune teller or other had told her so when she was a child.

“ Morning, however, came at last, and we were so much hurried that we had no time to remember our forebodings. Besides, the sun rose cheerily, and when once the night is gone, it is wonderful how all its troubles are forgotten, however heavy they may have been. George came to attend us to church ; he was in high spirits, and a handsomer young man I would not wish to see. This sudden voyage, it seemed, had been planned in consequence of some private information which Wells and Co. had received, and the Royal Elizabeth was to be despatched to Charleston with the least possible delay. The wedding was to take place at St. James', as being the church most out of the way. I own, I shuddered as we went thither, at the thoughts of some disgraceful scene taking place before the altar, and there was time to be afraid, for we had nearly a quarter of an hour's drive from the extreme other end of the town ; but the lovers did not partake of my apprehension.—Mr. Wells, who had been

up all night writing letters to go by the vessel, had kindly undertaken to meet us at church, and to give the bride away.

“ We had to pass through a street at the corner of which is the church, frequented by Captain Barkholme's family. Will you believe it?—he was there, sitting upon the steps of the chancel door, with a thick stick in his hand, and a few children standing round him, and staring at him. I saw this at a first glance, for I dared not venture a second lest he should see me,—and I was miserable lest either of my companions should chance to look out, and be shocked by so strange a sight, for he was, even then, completely intoxicated. Fortunately, however, they did not, and we accomplished our drive without any hindrance or interruption.

“ Mr. Wells, and the clergyman, and the clerk were all there before us. The last was a little pale paralytic man,—with a large baldish head, and half his face oddly drawn up towards his left eye, who walked with difficulty, and spoke in the most squeaking and dry voice I ever heard. I think I see him

before me, though we only met twice—so deep an impression did all these things make upon me. The service passed over as usual—the certificate was signed in due order. The bridegroom seemed quite beside himself with joy. ‘What are you stooping for?’ said I—‘I have dropped my wedding ring,’ said he; ‘And on Friday too;’—croaked out the ugly clerk. ‘We will soon find it,’ said George gaily—I could not force a smile, as I stooped to assist in the search:—without success however. The ring had rolled away into some corner or other, and, in short, was no where to be found.

“ Ah! I see you think me a fanciful old woman!—but how could any one expect such an unlucky wedding to prosper?—Mr. Wells had invited us to his house, to breakfast, and directed the coachman thither. We were riding on, I pondering on what had passed, when our carriage suddenly stopped. Mr. Wells looked out of the window to enquire the cause of our delay—when he drew in his head again, his face was as white as a sheet: ‘Sit still, ladies, for God’s sake,’ said he, ‘and do not look out!’—and putting out his hand,

opened the coach-door and alighted—George after him. I *could* not sit still, and when I looked out, the rumour in the crowd, of a man killed, reached my ear, at the same moment that the most frightful spectacle I ever saw, met my eye :—and, gracious Providence !—the dead man was Captain Barkholme !

“ A scream, which I could not repress, burst from me,—and at once a crowd of curious passers-by crowded round the coach, with details of the accident fresh upon their lips. The wretched man, entirely stupefied with spirits, had left his position on the church-door steps, I suppose with some vague idea of seeking out his son, and, whilst crossing the street had been run over by a break, in which a gentleman's groom was exercising a pair of spirited young horses. The man had called to him in vain,—the devoted creature tottered directly into the midst of their path, was knocked down, and the wheels went over his head !—

“ You may imagine the confusion and horror which this awful dispensation created :

and how this was heightened by news from the office, which was brought to us at Mr. Wells' house, whither Mary Anne, almost in a fainting state was carried. This was, that by great exertion, the *Royal Elizabeth* had been cleared out, and was now ready for sea, and, as the wind was fair, it was decided that she should sail by that afternoon's tide. The poor wife, who had never seen her husband since he had parted from her in the coach, to accompany his father's mangled remains home, was thrown into agonies by this cruel message: and close upon it followed a note from George himself, entreating her if possible, to come down to the pier head, that he might see her once more before he sailed—if only for a minute. So rapidly had time gone over in the confusion and distress occasioned by Captain Barkholme's awful death, that the day was already far advanced, and this the only chance of the new married couple's meeting. Mary Anne would go—at once. We called for a hackney coach,—but none was to be had,—so we set off to walk. It was a long distance, and how we got over it, I do not know, for

poor Mary Anne was in such a state that I expected her to fall down in the street at every step she took.

“ At last, however, we did come within sight of the pier-head. It was crowded with people, and from the spot which we had reached, we could see above their heads huge piles of white canvas moving rapidly alongside the shore, as the large ships which had got clear of the dock basin were standing out into the middle of the river, which was studded with craft of all sizes, till then detained by contrary winds. I dragged Mary Anne along as well as I could ;—and, in a few moments we were at the top of the slip, in the midst of passengers, porters, sailors’ wives, come on the same errand as ourselves. We arrived just, and only just in time. George who had delayed to the last minute, was standing with one foot on the gunwale of a boat. The stairs were so crowded that to attempt to reach him was impossible to two weak women,—one of them too, in such a condition. But, thank Providence ! he looked up and saw us ! and *such* a manly, affectionate

yet grave look he gave, as he kissed his hand to her, before the boat pushed off. I shall never forget ! We followed him with our eyes to the side of the Royal Elizabeth—for she was then only about five hundred yards from the pier-head. We could distinguish his figure from the crew and passengers on deck, as he waved his hat to us,—and while Mary Anne stood there gazing after him, with all her heart in her eyes, the gallant ship with all her sails set, glided from before us, like a heap of snow floating down a brook. Before long she began to melt into the heavy fog which lay low upon the surface of the water : —but we watched her, till the eye strained to its utmost, could not separate her, even as a speck, from the grey veil which hung upon the river,—and then,—we sorrowfully turned homewards.

“ You may suppose that to comfort Mary Anne was no easy task. She would shiver and turn pale, if a breath of air waved the withered mignonette in the box on the window sill. She would go down to the river side, the first thing every morning, and talk to the

common sailors herself, to possess herself of their *real* opinions of the wind and weather. I tried to represent to her, in defiance of my own presentiments, that there was no more danger in the present voyage, than in any other which her husband had ever undertaken; but only found how like reasoning with such fears is to twisting ropes of sea sand. She heard every thing that I urged with great patience, but it made not the slightest impression upon her anxiety. In short, her nerves were completely unstrung by the various events of her miserable wedding day, and I could only hope that time and good news would quiet their agitation.

“ It was on the Monday evening, that, instead of coming to me as usual, I received a note from her saying that Lucy Barkholme was so low after the funeral,—her married sister having that day left her for Yorkshire,—that she had promised to stay with Lucy all night. I was uneasy at this—for I knew what dismal company two such sick hearts would be to each other; but I was so busily engaged with my hands, that I had not time

to brood over these gloomy things long together. I was sitting sewing most industriously, when a sound reached my ear, which I understood as well as the physician does the hectic spot upon an invalid's cheek—the first shrill herald of a gale—a low murmuring, so low indeed, that I said to myself stoutly, ‘She will not understand it, and after all, it may come to nothing;’—and I pursued my work, resolving, if possible, to believe that my senses had cheated me,—nay,—I tried to sing to drown the sound, but it would not do,—the tune died upon my lips, and I could not help going to an upper staircase window which commanded a tolerably extensive view. The appearance of the sky was fearfully menacing: huge masses of purplish black cloud, of every fantastic form, such as towers, ships, enormous trees, were sailing rapidly over a field of pale greenish hue in the quarter where the sun had set, and the wind, which every moment became more keen and peremptory than before, scattered the smoke of the neighbouring chimneys hither and thither, as it were into fragments. ‘The Lord have mercy

upon poor Mary Anne; this will be a stormy night,' said I; then again I put my fears aside with the thought that in all probability Lucy would monopolise too much of her time and thoughts to permit her attending to the weather. I went down stairs again, and stirred my fire: and as I could not chain myself to my needlework, went to my little book shelves, and took down a volume—it was Falconer's Shipwreck. This last evil omen so completely unsettled me, that I felt that I could no longer remain quiet at home, and hastily putting on my cloak and bonnet, I went to the house of mourning, which was only a short distance from my own.

“The place from which a corpse has been carried in the morning must always look cheerless and dismal in the evening. Captain Barkholme had been a miser as well as a tyrant, and so totally disregarding of all home comforts, that his house, which was large and awkwardly built, was barely furnished, and looked desolate at the best of times. The old servant, who, for love of their mother, had remained with his daughters through all

their trials, ushered me up the wide oak staircase into the melancholy parlour, where the two young women were sitting. This room was at the back of the house, and much shut in by higher buildings: but I nevertheless wondered that the gale, which was fast increasing in violence, did not seem to have pierced to the apprehensive ears of poor Mary Anne, and this unconsciousness struck me so forcibly as to appear almost unnatural. Lucy and she were both of them surprised at my entrance, well knowing how rarely I stirred abroad after dusk; and I hesitated so much in endeavouring to account for my visit, that I am now amazed, when I recollect how little they seemed to notice this want of readiness. I know that I proposed to stay with them all night, for I felt a presentiment of impending evil which nothing could charm away, and which made me resolve to remain where I was, in case of my services being required. The old servant was ordered to prepare a room for me: she frowned, and seemed on a point of raising some objection,—and then, as if some sudden thought struck her, left the apartment.

“ I do not pretend to tell you how that miserable evening went over, except that I talked as fast as I could to keep myself from listening or thinking. It was strange that poor Mary Anne, who, till that day, had only one subject of discourse, never once adverted to George's absence, excepting to remark that ‘ it was a rough night,’ which surprised me yet more and more, as it seemed that she *did* hear the storm. I did not then know that her daily oracle, a humane old sailor, had told her, that, by that time, the Royal Elizabeth must be out in the open sea ; and that she relied upon his words as implicitly as upon her Bible.

“ Bed-time came at last ;—we kissed each other and parted for the night. I was conducted by the servant into a large dark room, to which a bright fire, and a more liberal supply of furniture than was the general use of the house, gave an air of comfort. I did not undress myself, but, leaving my candle on a table near the fire, threw myself upon the bed. By this time the storm had reached its wildest, the wind roared furiously in the chimney, bringing down clouds of dust, and chips of

brick at every gust, and assailed the large old fashioned window with such violence, that I expected every moment to see the floor strewn with its shattered panes. The fire in the grate flared fitfully into the room, and one bright tongue of flame leaping out further than the rest, disclosed to me, what I had not hitherto noticed, a large mirror above the chimney piece covered with a sheet.

“ I was in the room from which the dead man had that morning been carried out !—I sprung up from the hateful bed, and my first impulse was to rush out of the chamber, but I knew that I must then disturb the other inmates of the house, who would not have offered me this accommodation if any other had been available ; and besides, I took shame to myself for the weakness of my fears, when I remembered the One who is present and protecting every where. I could not, however, persuade myself to lie down again, so I drew an easy chair close to the fire, lighted my candle again, and sat waiting—for, do not smile at me if I tell you that I had as distinct an impression of the presence of Death, as if he had stood be-

fore me in a tangible form : in fact, so great became my terror, that I dared not turn round in my chair, and felt a comfort in its original cause, which was that the *mirror was covered*.

“ I have been told that I fell asleep—I know that I did *not*, for I heard distinctly the tremendous uncontrolled tempest, which raged with unbated impetuosity ; and yet, through all this, I heard and could count the beating of my own pulses, as full yet as minute as the tick of a watch. I noticed also the fire burning low, and the candle expiring, but I could not prevail upon myself to extend my arm to trim it. The door of the chamber was on the other side of the fire to the one on which I sat,—I had taken my eyes from it for one instant, when they fell upon it again, it was open, wide open ; for I could distinctly see the black cavern thus revealed upon the dusky brown glow which mantled the corners of the room.

“ I breathed thick and low, and the oppression which I have described to you became every moment more intense and constraining

than ever was weight pressed upon a sleeper by night-mare: and yet every sense and perception was sharpened. Presently I thought that I heard upon the stairs an irregular lumbering sound, as of a heavy sack raised from step to step,—but I was not aware of any decided tread. I could not choose but look, and saw, as clearly through the gloom, as you can make out objects in the dark parts of pictures, a tall figure in a long sea-cloak, standing motionless in the door-way. The head was uncovered, the long black hair streaming with water, the bright dark eyes, set and staring. I thought that the appearance made strange un-life like motions with its lips and hands, looking fixedly towards the bed, as if it were holding mute discourse with some one there. I knew the face as well as my own. The horror which seized me is beyond description. I could not have stirred, nor turned round, if life itself had depended upon it. For a moment, I tell you, I saw this apparition, and then it seemed to melt into the gloom, like a bubble disappearing in water. The strange sound which preceded its coming I heard no more.

“ I remained for a few seconds entirely motionless. My sensations were totally different from any that I ever experienced before : excitement and an over-powering sense of the nothingness of earthly things, being strongly mixed up with mere animal terror. But, ere long, the last preponderated. I arose, and keeping my eyes fast shut, tottered out of the room,—down stairs,—made my way into the chamber where Lucy and Mary Anne were quietly asleep,—threw myself upon the bed, and I believe, fainted. When I returned to consciousness, they were standing over me half dressed, and morning was already in the east. I kept the story of the night to myself, and endeavoured to lay the blame of disturbing them upon sudden illness ; yet, whenever I ceased speaking, I had that awful vision before me—I was roused out of my own thoughts by Mary Anne saying ‘ We will breakfast betimes, for I must go down to the pier head, and enquire if any damage has been done at sea.’—I shuddered to hear her talk, and both Lucy and myself vainly endeavoured to prevent her from putting her intentions into execution. She

paid no attention to us, and continued incessantly repeating to herself: 'Pearson told me that by this time the Royal Elizabeth was out in the open sea, and that then there was no danger.' Pearson had lied, alas! to quiet the young wife's fears. The Royal Elizabeth had been detained in the channel by contrary winds.

"This fruitless persuasion of mine, had, however, the good effect of strengthening my own courage. We breakfasted speedily, and in silence, and then accompanied Mary Anne down to the river side. The morning was bright, but the wind so high that none who could remain at home would have wished to go abroad; the heaps of slates and chimney-pans in the streets, and the comfortless appearance of many unroofed houses, showed how violent the storm had been. In fact, when we reached the pier head, we found the strength of the wind yet so great that we could hardly stand upright. It was a wild scene, and the fierce gaiety of the tumultuous sunshiny sky and the hissing water now at full tide, contrasted strangely with the woeful and intensely interested expression of the few that braved the gale like ourselves,—

old sailors turning their spy-glasses towards the signal poles : anxious merchants wrinkling their brows with care, and holding their hats on their heads ; and shivering, half-dressed women and children clinging together to maintain their footing. Before us lay the river boiling up in short crisp foamy waves ; the water was of a muddy turbid colour, and full of shreds of timber, and bits of sea-weed as small as if they had been chewed. We arrived at an unfortunate moment. The corpse of a poor drowned sailor had just been washed up, and they were carrying it to the dead house upon a board. The face was thrown upon one shoulder. They said the neck was broken, the bare hands and feet were all bloody, and the trowsers, (his only remaining garment,) torn into small holes, as though they had been cut with knives. The people shrunk together as the body was borne past them, and many turned away their heads ; but Mary Anne fixed her eyes upon it as eagerly as if her fate was at the mercy of their scrutiny. A sort of half smile ran across her face, and she grasped my arm so violently that it bore the print of her fingers for weeks, as she cried out eagerly—‘ It is not—it is not he !’

“I entreated her to return home, to wait for tidings there, which Mr. Wells was certain to send her. And she, to whom constant change of place seemed to bring relief, consented. What a day we passed! every moment sending messengers down to the office, who constantly came back with the same answer,—*no news!*— Her agitation became so violent that I began to fear for her reason, and when evening approached without bringing any tidings, I proposed, that to relieve her mind she should go herself to the office and make enquiry. She answered me with a short hysteric laugh,—‘And so *you* are beginning to be uneasy? Let us go at once.’

“We reached the office about half past five; a time, when not many of the clerks were there, and the few who remained lounging about the desks, could or *would* give us no satisfaction. While we were waiting, and she, poor soul! was poring over the ship news in the newspaper, the conversation of two of the common porters caught my attention, and I drew near them to listen.

“ ‘She was not out of the channel early yes-

terday morning, Thomas ; Davey who came in last night, told me so.'

" 'Of what ship are you speaking,' asked I.

" 'The Royal Elizabeth, ma'am,' answered the man, touching his hat.

" 'And,' put in the other, 'she leaked when she went out to sea. Graham,—that's the mate ma'am,—told me so, himself ; and he laughed, for he said crazy boats lasted the longest :—he's as bold as the devil.'

" I could hear no more, and turned away from the ill-omened talkers. Now the clerks began to flock in from their dinners, and looked somewhat surprised to find two ladies in the middle of the office, standing there at such a strange time of day. Our situation became very unpleasant, and, having satisfied myself that no news really *had* arrived, I was endeavouring to prevail upon my charge to return home, when a sudden rush of all the young men to the counter interrupted me. I heard one of the clerks say, 'To think of letters coming in such state !'—another cried out 'Whatever is all this bran for ?'—'Good heavens !' exclaimed a third, 'look here, the Royal Elizabeth's letter bags !

she is lost ! de—!’—when the cash keeper put one hand on his mouth, and with the other pointed towards us. There was a moment’s dead silence. The poor terrified creature began to tremble, and sink upon her knees, and ere I could support her, or any help approach, fell flat upon the floor in a swoon, from which I thought,—and, God forgive me !—*hoped* that she would never recover !

“ It was at least two hours before we durst make the slightest attempt to move her, and even then, she was so much more dead than alive, that I expected, each moment, to feel her breathe her last in my arms. I was anxious, however, to convey her out of the immediate reach of rumours which began to come in, bearing more and more certain intelligence of the loss of the doomed vessel, it was said with all hands on board. Mary Anne, however, never revived till her fate was decided beyond the shadow of a doubt, by the arrival of the handful of passengers whose lives had been spared, and who had seen Captain Barkholme washed from the deck of the Royal Elizabeth a few moments before she struck on the rocks near the old Head of Kinsale.

“The poor widow recovered, but only to become so childish and confused that no one can tell how much she feels or remembers. Mr. Wells has been as good as a father to her. He settled an annuity upon her, and at her own request, removed her to a quiet village in Warwickshire; ‘Any where’ she murmured, ‘to be out of the way of the sea!’ For my own part, I have reason to believe that she has some enjoyment of life; except when strange fancies torment her, and she thinks that her husband is long in coming back, and will sit waiting for him at her cottage gate for many hours at a time. But such fits do not come very often.

“The coincidence of which I promised to tell you is this. I was sitting alone, on the day when the first of the passengers I mentioned as being saved, arrived in town, when I was called down to speak to the disagreeable looking clerk of St. James’s Church. He came to me (because he did not like to distress the poor widow by his presence,) to desire me to restore to her poor George’s wedding ring which his wife had that morning found while she was cleaning the church. It was broken! I have kept it by me ever since.”

THE STREETS, No. 2.

THE WORLD UPON WHEELS—A FANTASY.

“ How provoking !” cried my fair friend,
“ another pin gone !”

I stooped, as in duty bound, to seek for it.

“ Do not trouble yourself—this is the seventh that I have dropped within the half hour ; I wonder what can become of them all !”

“ What,” said another gentle voice ; “ if there be a world of pins, in some star or other !”

We all laughed at the conceit, and, to one of the company, who has the unprofitable habit of dreaming with his eyes open, it opened

a long train of amusing speculations and images. For I thought that I was in the country of which the lady had spoken—the region where the lost pins of all ages are reunited. The monarch of that strange and glittering empire, was a diamond which had dropped from its place in some fold of Cleopatra's robe, which the queen, in the ostentation of her extravagance, had forbidden should be sought for at the moment of its loss,—and it had thus been overlooked by page and waiting-woman, when the gorgeous banquet was over. I walked to and fro among the people, an industrious race of those common-place individuals, of whom an entire row at least is dismissed to its destination, every time that Belinda makes her toilette. I discovered also the Canton of crooked pins—the territory too, of those spectral looking creatures, whom some evil chance hath decapitated—the quiet places where bodkins lay their lazy length along,—and the Elysium of departed needles; but while I was pursuing my researches with increasing curiosity, methought that some of the inhabitants of this singular country, jea-

lous of the intrusion of a mortal, pricked me so keenly that I cried out,—and behold, I was wide awake !

So deep indeed, had been my trance, whilst I was busy exploring the mysteries and curiosities of this pin-world, that I had bid my friends good night, and walked out into the street without knowing it. I was now on my way home, before one of those vacant spots of ground, which at Christmas time, are occupied by itinerant caterers for the amusement of the public. The scene had that sort of barbaric life and animation about it, reminding me of the accounts one has heard of the palace precincts of the rich Black Kings in Africa. I have always fancied that the approach to their presence must be through much such a vestibule of tawdry finery, and noise, and dirty crowds. On the present occasion, I was dazzled by the number and variety of the spectacles before me, and could not help saying aloud : “ Well, if I have left the world of pins, it is to alight in the fairy-land of the World upon wheels !”

It was some moments before I could look

coolly round me, and take an inventory of the incongruous sights and sounds of this extraordinary region, so confused was I by the cries of the motley company of spectators, and the clang of the wretched music, which seemed valued in proportion to its dissonance. In the centre of the vacant space of ground, now hardened by a frost three weeks old, were stationed three enormous caravans of wild beasts, "containing," as their panegyrists set forth, "the united natural treasures of both the hemispheres," and naturally taking precedence of the meaner establishments on either side of them, in right of their superior size, and their band of beef-eaters arrayed in tarnished livery, whose horrible concert of wind instruments out of tune, must have had an absolutely surgical effect upon any ear, which found pleasure in well-assorted harmonies. Above their heads, brilliantly illuminated by coarsely flaring lamps, were pictures, as large as life, of "the great Bear, and the little Bear, and the Nylghau of the sandy deserts, and the Cassowary, and the Crocodile and the Boa-constructor" (for which new reading I am indebted to

one of the crowd)—and upon the wooden steps leading to this palace of animated nature, was stationed a gigantic figure, chosen for his stentorian voice, who never ceased bidding the generous public to the entertainment within,—whose vociferous invitations reminded me of the “what d’ye lack?” times, when shop-keeping must have been an occupation worth pursuing, for the variety and amusement it afforded, instead of being as it is now, a respectable hum-drum calling, carried on behind counters, and under the shadow of festoons of drapery.

Cornerwise with this splendid menagerie, a *corps-dramatique* had pitched its tent, and to stimulate the curiosity of the gaping throng, ever and anon some hero in tin helmet, or some queen in pink calico train strutted out, enacting dignity in dumb show; and then, as if recalled to consciousness by the shrieks of delight which their stately presence failed not to elicit, retired as majestically as they had come forth. Once an hour too, a *corps de ballet* turned out, to show the resources of “Mr. Hick’s unrivalled company;” but the ex-

hibition of their skill brought me no mirth, for the night was bitterly cold, and I could not help wishing for an armful of blankets wherewithal to shawl the red necks and redder elbows of the scantily dressed *danseuses*—and yet many of these had probably, of their own mad choice, preferred so scrambling and degraded a life as this, for the sake of the trumpery and tinsel thereunto appertaining, to the duties of a more regular and profitable way of earning a livelihood.

Next in importance to these was the house of the Giant!—What poetry and legend lies in the name!—the mind at once pictures it as some lofty rock-pillared cavern, decorated with huge shapeless carved images, like sea-monsters turned into stone. But how were such pleasant and awful fantasies mocked, by the neat appearance of the black and yellow mansion, with a chimney, and windows pranked out with muslin curtains—a front door, with its knocker, and brass plate, with the Giant's name engraven thereon! Nor was the Giant permitted the dignity of a solitary life—he had his companions, “the Muscovian

dwarf, the smallest woman in Europe," and the "large girl" whose portrait, in a white frock and pink toque was so satisfying, that one stepped back a yard, at the bare idea of encountering such a mass of flesh and blood, and, when one looked at her apparently tiny residence, next began to wonder, like Peter Pindar's King Solomon over the apple dumping,

"How—got the apple in?"—

This was, without doubt, the favourite one of all the minor entertainments, though more expensive than the theatricals, and less diversified than the show of the learned Pig opposite, whose *programme* of exhibition boasted, "in addition to the feats of this wonderful and almost rational animal," of a performance upon the musical glasses, "and imitations of the feathered tribe by the *Sieur Sanché*." These monsters too, were patronized by people of a somewhat better class; persons who despised the representation of "the Outlaws of the terrible glen," as a low performance, and the learned Pig's display as only child's play. It were endless to describe

the coat of inferior exhibitions which surrounded the aforesaid: Punches—raree shows—wax-work, containing the King, the Queen, Bonaparte, the Cham of Tartary and his wives, Burke and Thurtell,—and all to be seen for a penny!—it were almost endless still, (could such a thing be) to recount the humours of the crowd of gazers—the strange remarks, credulous, shrewd, coarse, and witty, of the company assembled within this department of the World upon wheels.

But the thoughts which arose upon turning away from these head-quarters of hubbub, are not so easily disposed of. What strange squalid lives must these itinerants lead, when not occupied in exhibiting themselves or their curiosities! They are as separate a class in themselves as sailors or gypsies, and, in the course of their constant vagabondising, and constant alternation between misery and display, must pass through adventures, and experience feelings, with which those who pass smoothly along the highways of this life, can never become acquainted. How curious would be the histories which a confes-

sional might extort from the members of that Thespian troop!—what tales of coarse reckless revellings, and low knavery — what ill-expressed strivings of imagination, vouchsafed to its possessor in measure sufficient only to render him lawless and thoughtless—what compunctious remembrances of days, when absolute want of food, drove the run-away into wistful thoughts of his father's house, quiet and perhaps sternly governed, but provided with bread enough and to spare. How many such admissions as these might be wrung from the most careless! mixed up with so many strange and stirring occurrences, that the ear could not choose but listen, while the judgment condemned. The giant and the dwarf too, would have their story to tell, and one of a yet more painful cast:—they would complain of constant confinement, of unnatural means resorted to to exaggerate personal defects, of the coarse insolence of vulgar starers, of hard treatment from those into whose hands it was their evil hap to fall. They would tell such a tale as this, I say, if their feelings had not been blunted, and their faculties narrowed by

the miserable life they led. It is to be hoped that this last is the case,—that they may not be tormented by the perceptions which make so many recoil from the bare idea of looking upon them ;—and it is to be hoped yet more that this custom of the old feudal times which we have retained, (while we have discarded so much that is picturesque and poetical) of regarding those whom Heaven has visited, as fit objects of entertainment, will, ere long, wear out, and be obliterated by the spread of cultivation and good feeling.

But which of us has not known moments when a sudden inclination to wander has seized him, and he could be easily brought to think, with strange longing, of the lot of those who may be drawn about in their habitation, if they like it, half the world over ! To think, for instance, of the enjoyment of passing from town to town at will ; of halting, on some autumn evening, at the outskirts of a wood to gather nuts, and roast potatoes in the true gipsy fashion !—Such wanderers as we could envy, in such a mood, must surely have another sense or two, in addition to those possessed by people

“who sit at home at ease,” and know the count of the chimneys which their windows overlook. While these free people are living, the world is going round under them. New scenes and new faces meet them at every step; if they have breakfasted in a dingy country town, they may eat their dinners in the midst of some free heathery common, or within the sphere of the scent of a bean-field, and still be at home; and halt to sup underneath some ruined wall, catching the last sunshine, just out of a rich old fashioned village. In such a humour as our present, the small trials of scanty meals wet days and windy nights are forgotten, and we covet nothing so much, as to harness a pair of horses to our elbow chair, and to set off to see the world at once!

But enough of such immature, and (some will say) unprofitable fancies—and yet into how small a corner of the World upon wheels have we peeped!—No mention has been made of the province of stage coaches—so fertile in incident and character, so precious to the novelists of twenty years ago: though it is

strange that in these days of gossipry, no Jehu has raked up his reminiscences of the people whom he hath driven, and the changes, which the road, daily travelled by him for so many years, hath undergone. No attempt has been made so much as to enumerate the different classes of equipages, albeit, if the vehicles in a coach-maker's hospital could be induced to talk, they would, doubtless, recount marvellous pithy and profitable things. Nor, descending thence, have I considered carts, taxed carts, ass carts, (the meanest of all wheeled carriages, excepting the model of a ship drawn through the streets by the maimed and one eyed sailor)—a strange presentiment having “changed the spirit of my dream.” Chemistry is at work in his laboratory and Mechanics upon his models, nor will they labour in vain. Mr. Vallance's tunnel will be made available, and people be *shot* abroad on their journeys of business and pleasure. Rudders will be contrived for balloons, and, if wheels be allowed to remain, they will be only spared to such vehicles as can be propelled by Mr. Po-

cock's kites, judiciously regulated by reins.
And thus the things, whereon I have ventured
to lucubrate, shall depart like the phantoms of
a vision, and be seen no more !

SOCIETY IN A SEA-PORT TOWN.

BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

THE chapter of things should never be quitted for that of persons, without strict self-examination on the part of the chronicler. It is totally impossible to stand alone in the midst of the world without feeling neither love or hatred; it is almost as impossible to treat of that world, and remain unbiassed so far by our individual impressions, as not to flatter or falsify the original in the picture we are attempting. What an unreckoned up sum of wrong thinking and consequently acting, do we owe to the scandal devised by embittered feeling, and

slighted pretension ; to the impatience of the fastidious author, and the arrogance of the narrow-minded one as displayed in their works. How delightful then, would it be, if some inhabitant of another planet would alight upon ours, with spirit and interest enough to carry on the game among the rest of the puppets, and superiority enough to protect his temper from being ruffled by its vicissitudes : with a keen eye to discern and dissect character withal, and a spirit sweet and charitable enough to allow their full consequence to temptations and unfortunate chances, and to excuse foibles and littlenesses. We might then hope to see a true picture of *life as it is*, set before us. At present, we can expect nothing better than a faint copy or a caricature.

It will therefore be by much the most prudent for a resident to refrain from attempting any very minute description of the society of a sea-port town, lest he should be charged with personality, satire, etc. To speak generally of its spirit, is another and easier matter. To say, that in a place singularly destitute of nobility, its inhabitants have themselves substituted an

aristocracy of wealth in place of one of family, is, perhaps, some little beyond the precise truth; and yet, it comes nearer to the truth, than any other form of words which could be used. There is as much subdivision into sets and sects, as much exclusiveness, with all its train of bad consequences, as in the wider and nobler circles of the metropolis—and over all, and through all, a mercantile spirit at work, which is singularly unfavorable to the development of mind. There is, indeed, scarcely any inducement for a man to exact and improve the powers with which he has been gifted, if, valuing every thing by the standard of pounds, shillings, and pence, he feels that his standing is secure, that he may talk wisdom or folly, as he will, and still be looked up to in society, as a person of consequence and authority;—nay, that he is in most circles more popular as he is, than he would be, were he to bear the character of a hard reader, or a deep thinker. The withering influence of Fashion, has also its share in depreciating the standard of intelligence. Our circles are not wide enough to allow of individuals setting up as *charac-*

ters ; in which case, alone, does she tolerate any originality of thought, word, or deed—she therefore, imposes upon her subjects an uniformity of conduct and manner ; trammelling them as effectually within her artificial ordinances, as the conjuror, when he confines the chicken within his magic circle of chalk.

But, it seems to me, that we are fallen on particularly cheerless times, as respects ease or enjoyment in general society. As far as concerns the men, the age of dandyism has, thank Heaven ! passed over : the delicate youths who put their hair in *papillotes*, and ironed their cravats upon their necks, are now striving, in the mart of business, for their rising families, or shivering over their cheerless bachelor hearths, remembering days and glories gone by, when it was at once their occupation and their pleasure to rival the caprices of fair ones as fantastic and *maniéré* as themselves. But though the present race of men may be less finical than the last,—poor society is no gainer by their increase of manliness. If they are less sedulous attenders of balls than their predecessors, they are more

constant at dinner parties ;—and at these they love to herd together, to talk the strong talk of emptiness—of their dogs, and horses, and amours,—and to settle the great questions of the day, over which statesmen are racking their brains, and for the right understanding whereof, philosophers are patiently drawing their conclusions from the experience of the past, in a few stout words, against which there is to be no appeal. As to pursuit of any kind, beyond the above mentioned amusements, it is almost utterly unknown among them, and even should any one be followed in secret, it is not to be alluded to in conversation, if its follower would keep clear of the artillery of idle tongues, ever ready to satirize what their owners do not comprehend.

On the other hand, the present system of female training, has its share in making society a burden, instead of an excitement and an exercise to those who understand something better than vapid talk about the nothings of the day, or the more racy amusement of quizzing your *vis-à-vis* in a quadrille. While Fashion attacks any tendency to *bluism* with

her most blighting ridicule, and inculcates a cold *posé* demeanour, under which every natural impulse and feeling is to be impenetrably concealed, Education has parcelled out the time of her victim, and carried her at set hours from French to history, from history to music, from music to metaphysics,—and so on, without ever stopping to study the natural biases and talents born with her. What a marvellous discrepancy is there between these two codes ! Routine (for it is dishonouring Education to allow her counterfeit to assume her name) ordains that the young lady of the nineteenth century, shall know every thing :—Fashion values her in proportion as she talks as if she knew nothing—Routine crams her with book-learning,—Fashion teaches her to sneer at clever people ; and thus, between the two, the natural buoyancy of girlhood, which never stayed to consider whether the laugh was a tone too loud, or the step a thought too quick, or the talk a shade too confidential, is as completely crushed as if it had never existed ; and there seems now no longer any intermediate step between the child on her way to school, and

the well-tutored, well-dressed woman, armed at all points for society, and equally proof against enjoyments and annoyances.

Grammarians tell you to prove a rule by its exceptions, and it would be as ridiculous as false to say that we have not many who stand out, in bright relief, from amidst this general barrenness. But sectarian differences of religion and politics keep these much asunder: and the powers, which they might individually employ for the edification of general society, are sadly cramped by the suspicious dislike wherewith the world of common place people regard them:—a world unjust as it is vain, and, at any time, more ready to overlook moral defect than to forgive mental superiority. Thus it is, that unless a man wishes to expose himself to the sneer of the million, he must as sternly confine every symptom of enthusiasm and imagination within the silence of his own breast, as if it were a noxious influence, instead of being a link of that golden chain which connects the world below with the world above. Thus it is that the teachers of our children, those to whose au-

thority and discretion we intrust our most precious treasure, are so often humbled to the condition of superior menials ;—that the weak and ignorant listen to the malice of antique prejudice or the folly of ridicule, and regard the artist as a hireling from whom a certain quantity of a given commodity is to be *purchased*, instead of as one who is honourable, from the inspiration of talent which has descended upon him, and as worthy of courtesy and consideration, as if he were the founder of a fortune, or the rectifier of a popular abuse. And what is the consequence of all this strange pride and pertinacity ?—The artist, heart-sore at finding that, in these enlightened days, the calling to which he belongs is considered little more respectable than that of the *jongleur* or mountebank in the old feudal times, is too often driven by his irritability into low and disgraceful courses ; and if he is too high minded to become a sycophant, frets out his life in scorn of those, to whose patronage he is compelled to be indebted for the means of subsistence.

This is stating the case broadly, and some will say rudely ; but the harm which society

both commits and receives by perpetuating this narrow spirit, is so great, that one cannot touch upon it with a light pen or an indifferent heart. How much beauty, how much embellishment, how much instruction is excluded by the poverty of its judgment! how much talent is destroyed in embryo, how many a gentle and earnest spirit embittered for ever by its uncharitableness! It is not to be wished that all should be men of letters, all *dilettanti*. Heaven defend us from affected enthusiasm, and the apish criticisms of the shallow! but to every class should be allowed a clear stage and a candid hearing; and all who are sincerely devoted to their several professions, be they followers of arts, sciences, or commerce, should meet on equal ground, and cease to cast in each others' teeth, the terms of opprobrium bequeathed to them by the imperfect enlightenment of their ancestors.

But, to return from these grave considerations;—there is one feature in a sea-port town like ours, at once its pleasantest and most painful, of which one might write down reminiscences from “July to eternity” without the

fear of giving offence to any one—I mean, the frequent appearance amongst us of “birds of passage.” Most pleasant is it to welcome to your hearth cultivated and kind hearted strangers, to exchange your ideas with theirs, to become, through their means, familiar with the persons and habits of foreign countries; and most painful, when they have ceased to be strangers, and you have long loved and cared for them as part of your own household band, to bid them farewell, and to know that it is more than probable that, on this side of the grave, you will meet each other no more!

Nothing, indeed, is more agreeable than to have free admission to a family circle which is open to such chance society. Our town is especially rich in foreigners: the trim and gallant Frenchman, the true hearted German, the earnest and industrious Swiss, the passionate Italian may be found in almost every circle. I cannot but recal with pleasure the remembrance of a few acquaintances I have made in one house where there is nothing of style, nothing of money to attract, nothing but a hearty English welcome, and a readiness to

sympathise with feelings and interests a little out of the beaten track of every day life. There might not seldom be found the gifted of our own land, as well as the stranger within its gates. There it was that I often met with one, for awhile resident amongst us, the music of whose poetry has filled so many an ear,—and yet the spirit which inspired her verse was less bright and varied than the one which shone out in her conversation; whose thoughts flowing spontaneously and richly forth formed living breathing pictures: from whose lips any romantic incident, any heroic trait, came forth, with yet a further grace and glory: whose imagination, when set free, can riot among the quaintest and most ethereal fancies, and delighted all hearers by its profusion, as well as its gamesomeness: one, in whom with the utmost feminine delicacy, was combined a subtle and sprightly humour, which could extract rare merriment out of the occurrences of the passing moment: whose mind seemed to embrace and retain, as it were, by instinct, every thing that was elegant and refined. Alas! she is now gone.

But among the less known individuals who

occasionally joined the circle I describe, and who are now scattered to the ends of the earth, there was much to interest, much to remember. Many of these were foreigners, sent hither for a term of one or two years, to test the strength of some love compact, or to acquire knowledge of other languages and mercantile experience at the same time, and who won their way, at first by their homelessness, in a strange land, by their uncommon speech and ways of thinking, and afterwards, by a degree of regard on their parts, which one of the English, who, as the classical author of *De Vere* so justly says, “are slow to move,” could hardly have conceived within so limited a space of time, and certainly, if conceived, would not have exhibited.

There was Henri D——, that strange mixture of good feeling and bad temper, of talent and obstinacy, whom you loved as you do a child, in spite of his childish naughtiness; although you never knew whether “the observations he chose to make,” (to use his own phrase when provoked) might not terminate your intercourse in some sudden and awful quarrel. He was every

thing by turns : a dabbler in science, a musician, a politician, and all these with a vehemence and *abandon* which made wise heads shake at his whimsicalities, till they resembled a mandarin's in a tea shop. One night, sitting up till dawn, to practise harmonics, and airs on the fourth string of his violin, till the most musical ear could endure no more, and tortured neighbours rose up from their sleepless beds, and remonstrated ; on the next day, almost setting the house on fire, his own bed in particular, with some fulminating powder, or explosive gas ; anon, deep over head and ears, in fierce and noisy investigation and arguments upon the secret history of the French revolution, and withal, so affectionate while so unmanageable, that you loved him even while you ached with following his changes of mood. There was Victor S——, a true German : sentimental, deep hearted, musical, and fond of good cheer, who fell in love regularly about once in six weeks, and as regularly upbraided me for coldness, because of my inexperience in *la belle passion*, and whose handsome face, guitar, and inimitable waltzing, were so successful with

the fair, that he had an excuse for his frequent inflammability, such as an obscure individual like myself could never have pleaded. There was poor, heavy, honest, right minded Marc P——, full of excellent feeling, and overflowing with quiet and deep remembrances of his Swiss home, his sister and her flowers, who always seemed to me to be as unfit for the confinement of an office, as a shepherd would be to take charge of a cotton factory ; and who died suddenly, with few to attend upon him, and fewer to remember him, save the mere acquaintances of the moment like myself. O what memories must have haunted his last hours ! what fond impotent yearnings after that home, to speak of which, even when he was in strong health, never failed to call up a tear into his broad blue eye,—what vague yet intense wishes to be buried among his own people ! I never pass by his grave in a neglected corner of a dismal suburban church-yard, without feeling a strong pang of regret, and making a vow, as often broken as made, that I will never more embark any regard or deep interest in a “ bird of passage !”

THE FURNIVALS.

Steward. Be patient, Madam, you may have your pleasure.

Lady Bornwell. 'Tis that I came to town for.

Shirley's Lady of Pleasure.

PART FIRST.

IT is not many years since a genteel middle aged lady resident in one of the midland counties, was surprised, whilst sitting at her breakfast, by the arrival of a letter, widely differing from any of the epistles of her regular correspondents, which, for the most part, contained one side of condolence for some ailments, or of expressions of personal regard, one side and a half of gossip; and half a side and the ends filled with commissions or accounts of the execution of the same. The letter which made Mrs. Peters

smile and sigh at the thoughts of old times, ran thus :

“ My dear Charlotte,

“ I flatter myself that I am on the point of creating a great sensation by suddenly presenting to your notice your old and attached schoolfellow, (for believe me, dearest Charlotte, I have carried that attachment with me over half the world, and brought it home with me undiminished ; minds like ours, when once united in the bonds of amity, are not easily unlinked!) Yes, my dear Charlotte, I am once more in old England, after having endured many vicissitudes, and passed from the sweet spring time of youth, in the bloom of which we made our acquaintance, to the maturity of middle age. So have you, my love, but the flight of time need not prevent us from interchanging confidences as we did formerly : and I hasten to show you that I at least am not altered, by losing no time in claiming a renewal of our intercourse.

“ You will, long ere this have heard, my dear friend, of the irremediable loss which I sus-

tained in the death of my dear Furnival, and how the sole charge of four daughters at his decease devolved upon me, alas! from the quickness of my feelings and the tenderness of my affections, how unfit for such a charge! My girls, have, however, thank Heaven! made their mother's care a labour of love; and though great disparity of years exists between them, the utmost harmony reigns in our little circle. Yes, I am proud to say it, we *are* a happy family, and what is there in money, my love, (my poor F—— you will be glad to hear, left a comfortable, though by no means a splendid competence behind him) to compensate for the absence of that most inestimable of all earthly treasures, domestic felicity? My Charlotte, will, I hope excuse me, if, with a mother's partiality, and a friend's confidence, I attempt their portraits.

“The eldest of my flock, called after myself, Letitia, resembles me no less in person, than in name. She is considered very handsome, and is endowed with that dearest charm of beauty, utter unconsciousness of its possession. Her capacity, though not brilliant, is sub-

stantial and sufficient, and she loves her own home with a devotion equal to that which made me feel it so momentous a sacrifice to accompany my dear Furnival to the altar. She is my chief comfort, though I would not for that reason have you undervalue my Alice, my second daughter. Of a more mercurial temperament than her rightly judging sister, my Alice has caused me many fears, unconsciously on her part, dear girl ! I must own ; but though she is a little volatile, I know that I can depend upon her principles, and is every day attaining to more regulative power over the sallies of her imagination, which you will agree with me, my dear Charlotte, are any thing but desirable in a young woman, accompanied as they are in the case of my Alice, with a warm temperament and a persuadeableness which makes me watch over her anxiously : though, of course, without exciting suspicion on her part. Of my two younger daughters, Hester and Carolina, (the last so named in a freak of poor dear Furnival's, because she was born on the day that a ship of his, of the same name, arrived from America) I have less to say : they

are amiable and affectionate children, and, under the care of an exemplary young woman, Miss Annesley, whose only fault is being a little too romantical, (and that I must endeavour to correct), will, I doubt not, prove a credit and comfort to me, when their elder sisters leave me in compliance with that law of nature which deprives mothers of the solace of the company of their offspring, at the time when they need it most."

"Dear me, what long sentences!" said Mrs. Peters, laying down the letter, wiping her spectacles, and taking breath. She proceeded thus—

"Mr. Radenhurst, the agent for my property in Tortola has prevailed upon me,—you remember, love, my extraordinary facility of temper,—to establish myself in this thriving and opulent place. I have sacrificed my own wish for retirement and quietness to the interests of my girls. They must enjoy the advantages which a town alone affords; were it not for their sakes, how should I delight to fly to some sequestered retreat like your own, and spend the remaining years of my life

amongst affectionate friends, in peacefully remembering the follies and pleasures of the days of our youth.

“ Write to me immediately—often, my own Charlotte; write to me as unreservedly of *your* hopes and prospects, as I do of mine, and my girls! and believe me, that want of space alone, (I never cross a letter, my poor dear Furnival used to say that a woman who crossed a letter *must* be a bad manager), prevents me from explaining to you more fully, how devotedly I am always

“ Your affectionate,

“ LETITIA FURNIVAL.”

“ Well to be sure!” said the quiet lady, “ to think of my getting such a fine long letter from Letty Johnstone! I wonder whether her hair is as flaxen as it used to be?”

The above high flown production brings us at once into the full current of our narrative, as to waste words upon finishing a picture already as complete as the one presented by the lady’s own letter, would be tedious and impertinent. Mrs. Furnival had no sooner

established herself and her flock in our thriving and opulent city, than she began to look about her for acquaintance ; and, being a woman of open hand, not uncomely exterior, and active ten years beyond the usual activity of forty seven, “ success,” to use her own language, “ crowned her endeavours.” Her card rack was crammed with the names of a large acquaintance ; and had not the hours “ which her dear girls devoted to their studies” been carefully portioned off from the rest of the day, she was wont to boast, in the triumph and thankfulness of her heart, that her knocker would not have been still for a moment. But her girls were to be accomplished as well as fashionable ; to play with the last finish of musical perfection, and to draw sketches from nature, and for this purpose, masters were sought out at any cost or charge, and entertained with good words and better cheer, that they might take an extraordinary interest in their pupils’ advancement. In short, within a wonderfully narrow space of time, Mrs. Furnival’s name was almost as well known in the town as the mayor’s, or the rector’s ; and

many of her guests were so complimentary as to assert that the attractions of the mother surpassed those of the daughters.

Letitia Furnival, the eldest, and the musician, was easily set up with a grand piano, and a harp, and two masters. The cultivation of Alice's talent for drawing seemed to be a matter requiring rather more deliberation. Mrs. Furnival lamented loud and long to every acquaintance, "the great want of graphic talent in the provinces. Could they recommend a drawing-master to her?—Mr. Love's colouring was cold—Mr. Skelthorne's perspective had been objected to; and then ma'am," Mrs. Furnival would say confidentially, "(Alice, my love, you need not listen); she is *so* sentimental, *so* susceptible, that it requires particular care to choose a master for her, and drawing, you know, Miss Mottram, drawing is a silent occupation, and I never should have had patience to sit by while she was taking her lesson; so that you see, ma'am, it is particularly necessary to be guarded in making my selection. Mr. Douglas, ma'am?—I never heard speak of him before, who is Mr. Douglas?"

Who Mr. Douglas was, is not to be told in a few words. Every body agreed in describing him as being *so odd*! His father had amassed a large fortune as a merchant, and, having been accustomed from his childhood upwards, to consider money-making the one thing worth living for, had early endeavoured to instil similar propensities into the mind of his only son. It was in vain: you might as easily have made a poker of a painter's brush, as a "steady clerk" of Robert Douglas. The boy, even in childhood, showed that extraordinary degree of quiet energy, which would have warned any person with more than one idea not to indulge himself in the fallacious hope of turning aside the very strong current of natural propensities. He *would* be a painter, —he was detected and punished for scrawling gryphons and queer looking old men, whom he called Polanders, upon the waste leaves of the ledgers, to which he was introduced when so small, that he could not descend from the counting-house stool without assistance; he appropriated his weekly half-pence (old Douglas being far too economical to allow his son any-

thing beyond copper), to the purchase of a colour box ; he sate up stealthily at night, and drew by the light of hoarded candle ends ; and as soon as it was dawn, applied himself with avidity to his beloved labour of daubing. In short, Nature manifested her will so early and decidedly, that every one, except the nearest party concerned, saw that it was useless to think of opposing her.

But old Douglas, like many a one before him, thought within himself that he would be stronger than Nature. He resolved that Robert *should* be a merchant, and employed every engine which want of sympathy, sarcasm, coercion, and neglect could furnish, to withdraw his son from his favourite pursuit. His labours were fruitless. The acanthus was not hindered from growing by the tile with which its leaves were pressed down ; they formed the capital of the fairest order of Grecian architecture ;—the boy's genius throve in all the more original fashion for being discouraged and repressed, and every day that he grew older, he bent himself to carry its aspirings into effect more firmly and coolly than before.

He was not one of those wild, hot-brained characters, who run riot in eccentricity, pleading talent as an excuse for their follies:—the developement of his reason kept pace with the unfolding of his abilities: and the two conjoined made such a formidable head against the purposes of the old man that, at last, when Robert had reached the age of eighteen, with many a bitter feeling of disappointment, he was fain to desist from urging his son any further; declaring, at the same time, that, as the boy had chosen his own path, he should maintain himself therein, for that *he* would lend no assistance of purse and countenance to contravene his own intentions.

The young man assented to this decree without a single remonstrance, and sedulously set to work to further his own views. And first, with the intention of laying by a fund for the purposes of foreign travel, he began to take pupils, to the amazement of every one who had heard him profess himself to stand in need of further instruction. These did not trouble themselves to consider, that since the early age of five years old, he had been un-

remittingly occupied in exercising a quick eye, and a ready hand upon every object presented to his view—that he had walked miles to study a prospect, or catch a peep of a picture or a statue, and returned again to correct his first sketches; they did not know that he was himself endowed with as keen an impatience of mediocrity, as the most fastidious critic among them, and they were presently undeceived as to the extent of his acquirements by his extraordinary success. In fact, he would have already been in Rome, at the time when my tale commences, had not his father's health began to decline very rapidly; and Robert, with a dutifulness equal to his energy, deferred the execution of his plans to attend upon the old man; without, however, the satisfaction of finding that he had gained any ground in his affection. It was the merchant's boast, that he never forgave or forgot; and his friends who knew him best shook their heads, as they prophesied that he would go down to his grave without bestowing a blessing upon his son's endeavours.

This, then, was the master engaged by Mrs.

Furnival for Alice : “ Just the thing—so steady, so gentlemanly, and so grave ; *he* was not the man to put any nonsensical notions into her daughter’s head, she was sure ! ”—

Never was good lady more completely mistaken in her calculations. Alice Furnival was, indeed, endowed with a more than moderate portion of that romance, the delusions whereof were so much dreaded by her mother. In fact, she possessed it in a place of talent of a higher order. She could, to a certain degree, appreciate the gifts and graces of other minds, without possessing many of her own ; if she had been educated among persons of intellect, she might, possibly, have been made an amiable and elegant young woman ; as it was, for want of support, her fancies, (to use a garden simile,) trailed aimlessly over her mind, without growing to a strength sufficient for the bearing of flowers or fruit. She was a devourer of novels in secret ; she kept an album and sometimes wept over it, and then again wept because her lot was cast among people who did not understand her character,—the common complaint of young ladies when they have

nothing else to complain of. The engagement of Douglas as her drawing-master was dropping a spark upon tinder, with a vengeance ! She had heard his history, and been touched by it ; “ It was so like something written in a book ! —*such* an interesting young man as he was ! ” She admired his drawings—she admired his hands as he drew ; the chivalresque and melancholy air of his person, (he was considered by common observers to be black, shy, and somewhat morose looking). From this, the step to admiring what he said, was a very easy one : and, it must be confessed that, flattered by a reverence which had never been paid to him by any of his other pupils, Robert laid himself out more in talk, during the hour in which he initiated Alice into the mysteries of savage looking old trees, and tumble-down houses, than in any other of the twenty four.

Gradually he was compelled to own to himself that he looked forward to this lesson with peculiar interest. His pupil, as she was almost clever, so she was almost pretty :—but a strain of weakness ran through the character of her face and figure, as well as of her mind.

Yet a ruder being than Robert could not have refrained from contemplating her with pleasure, as she lifted up her white ringletted brow from her drawing, to listen with eager interest to his more eager explanation of the terms and difficulties of his favourite art.

Time danced away so quickly over the heads of this gay family, that two years seemed gone like a day, and Mrs. Furnival found herself “still undeprived of the company of any of her offspring.” True it was, that her house was the resort of an infinite number of gentlemen—she boasted that she could command three to every one lady when she gave a ball; but they came and went, and as she thought within herself, it was very “extraordinary that nothing came of it,”—surely they had not heard of the hurricane which had devastated half of the Plantain Waters’ estate, and, for the present, diminished her income materially! Meanwhile, a suspicion began to creep across her mind, “that Alice was wonderfully steady over her drawing, and yet she did not finish so many pictures either.” For the first moment when she became aware of the ten-

dancy of her impressions, she was unspeakably shocked—gradually, she began to remember “how civil Mr. Douglas had been to them—so quiet and unobtrusive! and how he had drawn that sweet picture of Alice in an oval, which hung over the drawing-room chimney piece, and which some gentleman, who knew all about pictures had mistaken for a Mary Magdalen; and then his father was very rich, and every body said, likely to die soon; and Hester and Carolina were growing up fast, and promised to be handsomer than either of their elder sisters, and better mannered—Miss Annesley was a nonsuch of a governess!—In short, she really thought that it might be best to let matters take their own course; “and, my dear Charlotte,” thus she concluded a letter to Mrs. Peters, wherein she somewhat mistily stated her surmises and perplexities, “if I commit the happiness of my darling child into the hands of all powerful fate, it is because I know my own inability to decide for the best, and not that a mother’s heart has ceased to vibrate with the deepest anxiety for her daughter’s welfare, as also to feel that unre-

mitting affection for my old friend, which makes me subscribe myself your devoted

LETTY FURNIVAL.”

And how was Robert all this time?—Why, dreaming such a dream as would never have entered the head and heart of a person one jot less enthusiastic and inexperienced in the world’s ways, than himself:—in love of course. He had sketched out to himself a plan of improving and instructing one so docile and capable as Alice, and was little aware that, instead of carrying it into effect, he was himself becoming day by day blinder to the deficiencies which he had proposed to amend. At last, (and how it was brought about without a direct declaration, no one concerned ever could or would tell) it became an understood thing that Robert Douglas was to be regarded as Alice Furnival’s admirer; her mother, all the while secretly resolving in her own mind, that she would only allow the affair to proceed *in case*——, and, for this purpose, while she always received Robert with the utmost frankness and gaiety, she discountenanced all ru-

mours among her acquaintances with—"Now I beg,—now *really* there is no truth in it,—now I would not have it said for the world, it would place us all in the most awkward situation possible—for my Alice's sake," and the like; and, as the young lady in question was by no means so entirely occupied with her tacit engagement as to wish to shut herself out from society, or to refrain from enjoying herself when she was there, the world was simple enough to believe Mrs. Furnival's version of the story; and careful mammas wondered "that she would allow Mr. Douglas to be so much about the house,—but his father was enormously rich," and so forth.

Things were in this state when, one day as Robert and Alice were sitting drawing together, or, to be more precise, as he was leaning over her shoulder, to finish a certain birch tree, which, as she declared "would not hang prettily," Mrs. Furnival burst into the room in all the amplitude of cloak, hat and feathers, with an open letter in her hand.

"Bless me! how quiet you are, and *me* in such a bustle! where's Letty?"

“ Walking out, I believe, mamma.”

“ And Hester and Carolina, and Miss Annesley ?” continued she eagerly, “ tell them I want them *all* at once, why cannot they come to me ?—*Such* a piece of news, Alice !”—

The children and their governess obeyed the summons, and Mrs. Furnival, as was her wont, continued walking up and down the room at full speed, talking as she went :

“ *Such* a piece of news ! I never knew before that Arthur Furnival had left any children ;—let me see,—he is your second cousin, and, I dare say, will be here to speak for himself by the next ship.”

“ A cousin, mamma !” cried the young girls.

“ Children ! how you shout ! I wish, Miss Annesley, that you would be so obliging to make them attend a little to the modulation of their voices ;—yes, Alice ! a cousin ! who has not been in England for these ten years or more, has written to me from New York to request my permission to pay his respects to us as he passes through. It seems that he is rich, and, I should think, gentlemanly. I am sure of it by his writing ! but, listen to his letter ; and

I declare, here's Letty! dear girl! always just at the right time!—I beg you fifty pardons for not speaking to you before, Mr. Douglas; nay—now, you are not going;—well, if you *must* go, good morning.”

“ I do not wish to intrude”——

“ Nay, Robert,” whispered Alice gently, “ you know that we all consider you as one of”——her mother laid a peremptory finger on her arm, and the lover was allowed to depart.

“ And now girls! now Alice!——by the way you had no need to have asked Robert Douglas to stay—now for the letter!”——

“ What about, ma'am?” enquired the imperturbable Letty. Alice and Miss Annesley could not help laughing at her quiet voice and apathetic manner.

“ Miss Annesley—Alice—here is nothing to laugh at. You shall hear, Letty my love, you shall hear what he says!”——

“ Then it is a letter from a gentleman,” remarked Letty.

“ Hush, love! I am going to read it;” and standing still in the middle of the room she began——

“ My dear cousin,

“ It was with sincere pleasure that I chanced, a few days ago, to hear that a family of near relations, (and such agreeable ones too), were now residing in ——— I have long been a wanderer, having never, from inclination or necessity, entered upon a living—

“ A living—Letty—what can he mean ?”

“ A living—ma’am ?”

“ Perhaps,” suggested Miss Annesley, “ he may be in the church.”

“ Ah very true ! a very likely thing !—to go on then—

“ Entered upon a living ;—but I am at last tired of vagabondizing, and look forward with pleasure to returning to my own country, and to making acquaintance with such relations as yet remain to me. I shall sail from this port by the next ship, and only send this before me as an *avant courier* that you may not be startled by the actual appearance of yours very sincerely

“ SYDNEY FURNIVAL.”

“ A charming letter, isn’t it ?—Sydney Fur-

nival ! what an elegant name ! and rich too !— Alice come up stairs with me at once, I must have some talk with you—*you* need not, Letty ; —did not Captain Cronie say that he should come into luncheon ?”

“ Yes, mamma.”

“ Well then, will you make him my best compliments, and excuses, and say that I am particularly engaged this morning ; and do not forget the ginger, you know that he dotes upon it ; and I hope he will come as usual to meet our new relation.—Bless me ! and the wind is fair for vessels coming in ; come, Alice ! there is no time to be lost.”

Mrs. Furnival led the way to her dressing-room ; and having disencumbered herself of her walking apparel, took one of the easy chairs, and motioned her daughter to occupy the other ; assuming an air of thought and mystery, which sate ill upon her comely and usually restless features.

“ Alice,” said she, “ I am going to talk to you for your good.”

Alice groaned inwardly, remembering a pert remark which Carolina had once made on a

similar occasion : "that mamma was very overcoming when she began to lecture."

"Alice, do you remember how old you were on your last birthday?"

"Twenty. . . three, mamma."

"I hope not: surely not! why then Letty must be twenty-five! but the more need for both of you to mind what you are about. I was married before I was nineteen: my poor dear Furnival was so pressing!"

"But, mamma, Robert and I are both of us willing to wait," said her daughter simply, not as yet, dreaming of any one else; and, to do her justice, little skilled in *finesse*.

"Ro Whom did you say, child?" said Mrs Furnival, affecting stern surprise.

"Mr Douglas, you know mamma," replied Alice softly, hanging her head.

"My love, what is it I hear? what have you been doing? what have we all been doing? A drawing master! Alice, you have surely not committed yourself—I am angry—I am *very* angry with you!"

"But, my dear mamma," returned Alice, beginning to cry, "you know. . . ."

“ I know ! No, indeed, I do not know ! and when our new cousin is on the point of coming over ; and is so likely, that is, *might* wish to pay his addresses to you—O my love, not a word!—it must be given up ! what would Captain Cronie think of such a connexion?”

“ But mamma,” sobbed Alice, moved by this unusual display of vehemence, “ you forget Letty. . . .”

“ And what would Captain Cronie say to *that* ?” replied her mother triumphantly—“ No, no ! I trust that Letty is provided for, and a brilliant prospect it is. The castle Cronie estates, he told me, so lately as the night before last, bring in a clear five thousand a year ! and . . and besides this fancy of yours—a mere teacher ! What will our new cousin think of us ? Answer me, you silly girl, have you committed yourself ?”

“ I thought, mamma, that you understood. . .”

“ I understood !—I wonder how you could imagine such a thing ! but *has* he—now tell me at once,—if you do not mean to make me very angry.”

Now Alice knew that Mrs Furnival’s *very*

angry meant something very terrible indeed, which was only exhibited once in seven years; and the remembrance of the last wrath was so awful, that she durst but say: "that she was sure that Robert Douglas wished to marry her; and that she should—but that no definite engagement had passed between them."

"I am mightily glad to hear it," replied Mrs Furnival, whose brow seemed to change its intention of thundering that day, "mightily! such engagements are very awkward things to dispose of; we are all safe then, so long as nothing has been *said*. Alice, you must look your best while your cousin Sydney is with us; you shall have a pink satin."

"But, dear mamma, (now don't look as if you were going to be angry again) if you please I do not wish to—to—"

"Well, simpleton, to *what*?"

"It would be using him so very unhand-somely!"

"Cousin Sydney, do you mean? *him* is any body. Mercy upon us! what time and trouble it takes to manage some people! Don't you see, you foolish child, that nothing has been *said*;

such things go on every day. I insist upon you doing as I bid you ; and after all, no one knows how it may end ; and so—in short, you need not be uncivil to Douglas, you know.”

“ Thank you, mamma,” said Alice, wiping her eyes.

“ But remember you are to take most particular pains to please cousin Sydney, — a scholar, a gentleman, a travelled man, Alice, and a *rich* man !”

Alice could not help listening a little less unhappily than she had done awhile before.

“ Not that I would do an unhandsome thing for the world,” said her mother ; “ but fancy must give way to reality, and experienced heads must manage silly young folks’ concerns. Well now, have you done crying?—you shall have a new pink satin ; we will go to Beck’s and buy it at once, and look at his furniture prints—I shall fit up the yellow room for cousin Sydney.”

PART II.

“ Men have died and worms have eaten them,
But not for love.”

WHILST the mother and daughter were deep in the perplexities of India sprigs and fast colours, Robert Douglas was at home, listening to a communication, no less extraordinary in its way, than Mrs. Furnival's. His father, who was now entirely confined to his chamber, had sent for him, immediately upon his return from his morning's round, and Robert, who drew auguries from the slightest notice (it having often happened that the two had been weeks in the house without any intercourse passing between them) obeyed the summons with the alacrity of hope.

The old man was sitting in the full light of the window, closely wrapped in a grey duffel dressing-gown, with a fine and spotlessly clean white cambric handkerchief knotted loosely about his neck. His face, at a first glance, might have been thought fine and venerable, from the strong lines of his features and the profusion of long white hair which shaded it: at a second, a physiognomist would have discovered traces of worldly wisdom and mean desires sufficiently marked to destroy the illusion. His appearance however, was eminently respectable, his voice sonorous, his pronunciation plain and good; he always fixed his eyes full upon the person whom he was addressing, and never removed them, or turned them aside, till he had entirely finished his speech.

“ Sit down, Robert,” said he very coolly.

“ I hope you find yourself better this morning,” was his son’s answer, as he took a chair close to his father.

“ You are too near me, sir!—there—that chair will do. No, sir, I rather think that I am worse:—a month ago I was at the office every day, and now I can hardly crawl down stairs.”

“ I should hope that when spring comes. . . ”

“ Stop,” said his father, in the same severe tone: “ I have nothing to do with your hopes, except to tell you what you are *not* to hope. Robert, I was told yesterday, for the first time, that you are in love.”

The young man crimsoned deeply. “ I should have told you myself, sir,” said he, “ but—”

“ Nay, I have no claims upon your confidence; but I suppose you will wish to marry the young lady. Now, sir, I have sent for you to explain to you the circumstances in which you stand, with respect to your expectations; it has been always my intention to tell you whenever you should wish to settle for life. . . . ”

Robert bowed respectfully and his father went on,

“ As long as you were only living on here from day to day, it did not much matter how rich or how poor you were ; now, I suppose, it is or will be of some consequence for you to know. I have been disappointed in you, Robert ;—cruelly disappointed ! All my hopes, all my labours have been rendered worse than fruitless by your obstinacy and disobedience ;

my love has kept pace and proportion with them. I cannot, indeed, regard with complacency a living monument of my vexation; therefore your presence, instead of being a satisfaction to me in my old age—”

“ I beg, sir,” said his son rather quickly, “ that if you have any thing with which to reproach me, you will also do me the justice to remember—” but he checked himself; he could not bring himself, even in self-defence, to state the sacrifice of his own views, which he had made that he might attend upon his father.

“ You interrupted me.—This being the case, Robert, it would be absurd to expect that I should enrich you with the fruits of my long life’s labour; you, who have made its latter years so full of vexation. When I die, (I do not tell you this out of anger or sudden whim, you know me to be cool and inflexible), you will inherit an income of three hundred a year; the rest I have bequeathed otherwise. It behoves you, therefore, to exercise some prudence in deliberating how you mean to live, before you load yourself with the burdens which belong to married life. I tell you this, once for

all, that you may hereafter have no cause to complain of having been permitted to indulge false expectations. And now, sir, have the goodness to leave me, I hear Doctor Hammond upon the stairs. Go, if you please, and remember what I have told you."

Robert snatched up his hat from the floor; and, stunned, shocked, grieved beyond the power of utterance, rushed out of the house. He made his way to the pier head, which, at low water, is always a deserted place, and flung himself down upon a coiled cable. To think over the late conversation was no pleasant employment: it was not the idea of the probable loss of money which grieved him, not the prospect of a mean inheritance which had sent the blood to his cheek, as if propelled thither by an engine: it was the stern-heartedness which had prompted so unjust a resolution, it was the passionless tone in which the communication had been made, that stung him to the heart. And soon a strong feeling of indignant resentment would have arisen had he not repressed it by turning his thoughts into another channel. He was bound in honour to make

Alice acquainted with the news. How would she bear it? What influence would it have on the more than good understanding, which, at present, subsisted between them? There was little comfort in the involuntary answer to this mental question; and as if a weight of scales seemed to fall from his eyes, cold doubt was the reply—how different from the lover's honest trust which would maintain in the face of all the world, that his mistress was superior to all mercenary considerations! She was so gentle, so facile;—and had been brought up to consider the luxuries of life as indispensable to her happiness, and even to her respectability.—Yet this disappointing conviction, which flashed across his mind with a vividness not to be extinguished, did not by an atom, diminish the strength of his affection, which continued, as it had began, unbased on reason. For two years, he had unconsciously anchored all his hopes of future happiness upon it, and now he might be the destroyer of his own peace, by performing the duty of acquainting Alice with his father's intentions.

With this purpose of heart he availed him-

self of his first disengaged evening to call upon the Furnivals. He found the drawing-room full of company—there was a strong detachment of “the standing army of men,” as they had been facetiously called, who lounged in whenever they had no better engagement: sure, at least, of finding Mrs Furnival to laugh at, a good supper to eat, and choice wines to wash it down. Captain Cronie, a tall red-haired Scot, six feet two inches high, was sitting very dutifully beside Letty; Miss Annesley was winding silk from a chair; Hester and Carolina learning their first lesson in flirtation from two spare cavaliers, who were thought too small game for their elder sisters; Mrs Furnival was playing at shorts with three other young men; talking, laughing, dealing and winning, all in the highest spirits;—and she, whom his eye sought out at the first instant, Alice, was sitting a little apart from the noisy throng, with—O most unwelcome sight!—a stranger seated on a footstool at her feet, looking up, and talking to her with great animation, whilst she, it seemed, listened not displeasedly. Her head was drooped towards the speaker—her eyes

were half closed—and her mouth unconsciously answering his narrative with little quick smiles, which passed away only to return again and again.

The stranger, to whom he was introduced as the family's new relation, was a tall well-made man, with a dun complexion that might serve for either twenty-five or thirty-five, a down look, and crisp black curly hair which covered entirely a head a little too large for strict proportion. If, as Robert jealously thought, he was deficient in manner, the lack thereof was compensated abundantly by a fluency of speech, equal to Mrs. Furnival's own, and a conceit of himself, which made the presence of strangers rather a stimulus than a restraint. He was already quite at home among his new relations; he had, in the course of the first ten minutes, adroitly possessed himself of Mrs Furnival's good graces; he had shaken hands with Captain Cronie, as a person whom he was resolved to like for his cousin Letty's sake; and had overcome Alice with such profuse and eloquent descriptions of his rambles in foreign parts, such a phantasmagoria of traveller's wonders,

“of the riches of nature in the tropics; of the primeval grandeur of the American forests; of the unexplored sublimity of the Andes, and the extreme awfulness of a Chilian earthquake;”—and the like,—that the tender-hearted maiden was thrown into a perfect fever of delight and enchantment thereby, and began to regard the bold youth who could so well describe what he had seen, with an extraordinary degree of veneration. Douglas gazed for an instant on the unpleasant picture before him, in speechless uneasiness—when a simple voice behind him recalled him to his senses with—“Bless me, how like old Mr. Tubb, the button-maker!”

It was an old clergyman who spoke: one of that class of unaffected, pious and faithful-hearted divines, which has almost merged in the two extremes of over-strained enthusiasm and haughty self-indulgence—a man who was active and yet unpretending; and though wise in alarming the self-deluded, and gentle in encouraging the dispirited, as ignorant of the ways of the world as a child. Mrs. Furnival was fond of Mr. Evesham—“for he had known her poor dear Mr. F—” and he was occasionally found among

her guests; perhaps because he thought his presence might have its use; perhaps, because he held in no disdain the *occasional* amusement of a rubber. He was very much interested in the fortunes of Robert Douglas, and had made one or two ineffectual attempts to mediate between him and his father—and now shook the young man's hand warmly, with an expression of countenance which said: "You see, I don't forget old friends for new ones,"—an indiscreet mode of greeting a jealous lover certainly, but a characteristic one.

"Have you seen *this* Mr. Furnival before?" said Mr. Evesham, drawing Robert aside; "I do not like him much."

"No, I suppose he only arrived yesterday."

"The day before—and see how intimate he is with the girls already; calling them Letty and Alice as familiarly as if he had known them all the days of his life! I never thought that young men who had been long abroad came home good for much,—if any thing."

"And have therefore always so strenuously recommended my trying to be content at home," replied Robert a little bitterly.

“ He is to preach for me on Sunday,” resumed Mr. Evesham, meandering pleasantly along in the current of his own thoughts. “ I wonder what sort of a sermon he will make.”

“ I wonder too,” echoed Robert mechanically.

“ You are right ! you are right ! he *does* not look like a clergyman—and such bold eyes too, as he has ! I wonder at Alice’s allowing him to stare at her in that confident manner.—I’ll go and break up their conference.”

“ For Heaven’s sake, no !” cried Robert, his words choking his throat.

“ Why,” continued the other, “ they look much more like lovers than Miss Letitia yonder and Captain Cronie ;—bless me, if he is not holding Miss Annesley’s silk ! I must go and disturb these two, however ;” and escaping from Douglas he made his way across the room.

Left to himself, the unhappy young man proved all the bitterness of feeling, which every one must have experienced who has seen himself neglected for a new comer ;—and this was further deepened, by the consciousness that the secret which he had come thither to impart

was not likely to reinstate him in his former welcome. Twice he arose to go—and his heart failed him. At last the whist party broke up; Mrs. Furnival, who had won every game, and had the satisfaction of seeing every thing proceeding just to her mind, swept towards the corner in which the artist had nixed himself, with a book in his hand, so ingeniously held (up side down) as to screen himself from the possibility of catching or answering a look, *should* Alice be disposed to waste one upon him.

“ Well, Mr. Douglas,” said she very gaily, “ why are you moping here all alone? I cannot permit any of my gentlemen to be so unpolite. Come, get up, get up, and do not look so sour! Here, Miss Annesley, come and amuse Mr. Douglas.”

Miss Annesley declared her willingness to do her best; and as she rose to obey Mrs. Furnival's summons, the rest of the party, anxious perhaps for some little change, followed her example.

“ O, Mr. Douglas, do you know—that sweet picture of your pupil,—cousin Sydney admired it so much, that do you know, I have absolutely given it to him. He is quite a judge, I can as-

sure you and draws beautifully. He is to give me his own picture in return."

"Have you seen any of his drawings?" asked Mr. Evesham simply.

"I, I—Alice—do ask cousin Sydney to show you some of his drawings—he will refuse *you* nothing! Mr. Douglas, do not you think that there is an extraordinary likeness between them? Alice is my poor dear Furnival's image; they might almost be taken for brother and sister."

"Can the force of folly any further go?" said Douglas to himself, approaching Alice, whom her cousin had now quitted—"Alice," said he very softly—"Miss Alice Furnival, when will you allow me to speak a few words to you in private?"

Alice looked round her, as if afraid of being being watched or overheard,—perhaps for some assistance. But no help was at hand; and her lover repeated his question.

"To me, Mr. Douglas? we are so much engaged just now—but do not look so grave—let me introduce you to my cousin Sydney—you will like him amazingly, I am sure—he is so

cultivated — so agreeable and has seen so much that. . . .”

“ That you cannot spare a few moments to an old friend ! Well, it is perhaps no more than I ought to have expected. But do you mean, Alice, that it is to be all over between us ?”

“ Indeed, Mr. Douglas,” replied the feeble girl, now trembling with real agitation, “ indeed I cannot—you must excuse me this evening—I am not well.”

“ Well Alice,” said Robert, sinking his voice to its lowest tone : “ I think I see how it is : but I did not expect that you would have given me up *quite* so easily—this new cousin, then, is—is—It is perhaps best for us both. Farewell then, and God bless you !” His composure was fast failing him, and he had no other resource than to leave the house abruptly, and for ever. No one enquired “ why Mr. Douglas had not stayed to supper ?” —for Mr. Evesham was already gone ; and Alice, after a little soreness of conscience, protested to herself, that she was too much hurt to be able to think about it ; and allowed herself to be anew interested by cousin Sydney’s showy tales of foreign parts.

But the victim of Mrs. Furnival's schemes for the aggrandizement of her daughters and his father's implacability, could not bear all these changes with quite so easy a mind. He looked at the naked truth, that he was cast aside and slighted, with a determined fortitude which did not shame his energetic character. He suffered intensely, it is true, but wisely; for he resolved to probe the wound to its core, to the end, that his cure might be effectual. For two days he allowed his tenderness to apologize for the capricious and heartless behaviour of Alice, in the hope of receiving some message, some note of explanation. On the third, when none came, he manfully turned aside his mind from the contemplation of what might have been and what was assuredly now never to be—and resolved to seek for comfort and diversion of his thoughts, in arranging and maturing his plans for the future.

One instance, though slight in itself, must be mentioned, to show how resolutely he refused to yield in the least to the fond luxury of nursing his sorrow. A taste for music, as is often the case, was conjoined with his talent

for drawing; and among other modes of indulging it, he had joined an amateur choir of gentlemen who sung the service every Sunday in a certain church. That church was the one at which Mr. Evesham officiated—where cousin Sydney was to preach on the coming Sunday—and though his natural feelings prompted him to fly as far as possible from the place, he resolved to command them, and to appear in the orchestra as usual—though the effort was so great that he heard the beating of his heart, as distinctly as the treading of his feet, when he entered the church-yard. The bells were ringing merrily, the river, close beneath his eye, was sparkling and dancing in the sunshine; but he noticed them not, and stalked towards the belfry door, wrapt in the gloom of his own reflections.

It was well that he was not aware of a party entering the holy precincts by an opposite gate and about two stones throw further from the church than he was. These were Mrs. Furnival and all her family—Mr. Evesham in his canonicals, cousin Sydney and Captain Cronie; in short, the group of all others, that he would

have least wished to have encountered. Mrs. Furnival, with Alice leaning upon her arm, walked the first, between the two clergymen, a little hurried by the breeze, which, however, to compensate for its boisterousness, did full justice to her well-turned ancle and neat boots. "Yes, cousin," said she, "this is a fine old church; the tower is one of the very few remains of antiquity—"

"Not at this door to day," said Mr. Evesham, "we have just time to enjoy the sea view—and will go in through the baptistery. Ah! yonder is Douglas with his psalm book, looking as sober as if he were a Dean—See—at yonder corner of the tower—Almighty God!—look!—look!—"

All eyes followed his finger, as, rigid with horror, he stood rooted to the spot, pointing towards the building. The tower, which had resisted so many gales and the safety whereof was in no wise lessened, (so knowing people had said) by its swinging to and fro, whenever the full peal of bells was rung—seemed for one instant to lean over the body of the church, a hand's length further than it was wont;—so

far as to be beyond the possibility of recovering its balance. The compact stone work began to tremble, as if agitated by some inward convulsion—the unconscious ringers within applied all their strength to the ropes—then the outer side of the spire was sent with a sudden gash; and, with a long deafening sound, its whole length fell at once upon the roof of the church, which gave way beneath it, like a cobweb under a stone. A stifled shriek from those within the building—a piercing cry of agony and horror, from those collected in the churchyard—and one or two persons rushing madly out, maimed and bloody—and the catastrophe seemed complete! So sudden had it been, that its spectators could hardly trust the evidence of their senses; and sick with the excitement of the moment, reeled wildly to and fro like men drunk with wine!

It was a blessing, for which the congregation could never be sufficiently thankful, that this calamity happened before the service began. One or two old persons and a body of children belonging to some charity school had, indeed, been seen to enter. Immediately, as soon as the

horror of the moment had subsided, a crowd of able bodied men, (for the church-yard was presently filled with a multitude of people,) made their way into the building through the chancel doors. They found that only that part of the roof, which had covered the south aisle, was left entire;—and that so overloaded that it was momentarily expected to crash down upon their heads. The rest of the interior of the church was filled with a confused mass of rubbish; with one or two pillars yet standing, and a few ragged rafters and the bare blue sky above. Heedless of the warning of falling plaster from the small sound portion which yet remained, they began to force their way among their ruins and to encourage with assurances of help those who, it was hoped, might yet be spared. In the north aisle, which was almost entirely choked with beams, slates and enormous stones, they heard the weak cry of a child, and a groan which suddenly died away;—to that point the labourers turned the full force of their exertions. Meanwhile the windows were covered with the faces of those who had clambered up from without and were watching their proceed-

ings with agonized interest. At last, a strong man, a mason by trade, was seen to insinuate himself between two perilous looking masses of ruin, in the hope of finding some clear space within, or some means of delivering those who might be there buried alive. It was in vain—he encountered a mass of destruction, to remove which, would require the labour of hours; he had fallen upon some crushed thing, for he came out with his clothes and hands stained with blood! A shriek burst from the crowd that filled the windows; and many a miserable woman knelt down upon the tomb stones and prayed, in the bitterness of anguish, that her child might not be counted among the slain; but, alas! it was soon ascertained that one detachment of the charity children had entered the church a few moments before the spire fell, and of these only three or four came forth alive!

But to return to the personages of our story:—Mr. Evesham was the first to remember that Robert Douglas had been seen to go in at the belfry door,—and that he had never returned. Nothing could prevent this excellent

man from forcing his way into the thickest of the ruin, calling upon his friend to answer,—if he were yet alive. Captain Cronie was by his side; as for the rest of the party, they had been escorted home in fits by the considerate cousin Sydney: who judged wisely that “it was no place for ladies,” and led them from the spot.

Meanwhile, as every instant narrowed, so did it also deepen the interest of survivors. Gradually it became known, among the crowd, who must yet be among the ruins. One or two who had been extricated, had been carried home in the midst of their weeping families, too much awe-stricken to rejoice at their preservation;—it became too, more certain that those who had not been drawn or dug out, must have perished; and Mr. Evesham was on the point of leaving the building, with the most miserable fears for the fate of poor Robert,—when, on again venturing into the corner of the south aisle to which a roof still remained,—a low dull sound, as of a voice trying to make itself heard through many stones, reached his ear. He listened again, in an agony of atten-

tion—it was repeated. “Hither! hither!” shouted he to the masons, “there is some one alive in this corner.”—They obeyed his summons, and Martin, the strong man already mentioned, broke in the baptistery door, by throwing himself against it with all his weight, crying out in his loudest voice, “Help at hand!—who is within there?” and listening acutely for an answer, whilst he watched with an upward eye, the roof above, which was now perceptibly bulging downwards—The same voice as before, answered,—but they could distinguish no words.

The space within the baptistery door was entirely filled with enormous fragments of stonework and mortar. The men held an anxious consultation. “It is as much as any one’s life is worth to attempt to pull them down,—but, poor fellow! there must be some one jammed upon the belfry stairs, and we must get him out at all events.”

But how to get him out was the question. It was feared that their very attempt to deliver him who was immured, might itself hasten his destruction; for to remove one stone, was to

incur the risk of bringing twenty after it. Nevertheless, as this was their only chance, they resolved to try it. Mr. Evesham took a pickaxe and crow bar, and worked among them; and in the course of an hour, they had with cautious exertion, penetrated one of the layers of the ruin, behind which they supposed their victim to be imprisoned. They were rewarded for their labour, by receiving an audible answer from the object of their search,—that Robert Douglas was within, and as yet unhurt; though so hemmed in that he could hardly move, and that he feared any further attempt on their parts might end in crushing him to death. Mr. Evesham turned deadly faint on hearing these words;—the risk and peril had now reached their most critical point.

“ Indeed Sir,” cried Martin, “ you can do no good here! you had better go out into the air, while we endeavour——” He was interrupted by the sudden falling of a shower of dust.—“ Lord have mercy upon us! we are all dead men!” cried one of the masons; but with true English stout-heartedness, they

refused to abandon their work of mercy. It was well,—for the cause of this new alarm was presently evident; through a narrow cranny of the ruin, a damp, clammy hand was suddenly forced. “Is Mr. Evesham there?” said the same voice within; “I fancied I heard him speak.”

“It is I—Robert—I am here—we are at work to deliver you.”

“You cannot,” replied the other faintly but firmly, “I hear already something giving way. Shake hands, Sir! for the last time; let me have your blessing, and I pray of you all to leave me, for charity’s sake!”

“Leave you!” cried the men, encouraged by hearing him speak so near them, “that we will not—till we have brought you out. Gregory—that bar here! Allan, help Mr. Evesham, he is fainting like!”

The clergyman was now in that state of excitement which rendered his presence dangerous in their present imminent peril. He grasped Robert’s hand eagerly. “Bless — bless” — he sobbed out.

“Come away Sir! come away!” shouted

Martin, “ you must go ! some one is calling you without ; and you, inside there, draw in your hand. Now boys ! death or deliverance ! ”

Unable to endure the tumult of his feelings any longer, the divine suffered himself to be pushed back through the crevice, and was, in another second, in the open air. He was awaited by a no less moving scene than the one which he had just quitted. The crowd eagerly calling him by name, made way for him to pass to the spot to which old Douglas had been brought. He had heard of the accident, and, stung by a late-wakened remorse, had crawled from his sick chamber, and, dressed in his house garments, made his way thither to ascertain the fate of his son. He had scarcely entered the gates, when, wearied by so extraordinary an exertion, he fell to the ground. Some compassionate persons supported him, and a chair was brought from a neighbouring house,—for he resisted every attempt to remove him, with a violence even more dangerous than his exposure to the open air : and sat, with his eyes strained towards the church,

ejaculating such broken sentences of anguish—for he durst not pray—as made those who surrounded him tremble. As soon as Mr. Evesham approached him he seized him convulsively by both hands. Miss Annesley, who had lingered behind the rest of the party, was supporting his head,—for his exhaustion was momentarily increasing, and he cried out vehemently, shedding torrents of tears—“Pray for me! pray for me!—*will* he be saved?”

Mr. Evesham, summoning all his self-command, could not frame one sentence of comfort; but he mingled his tears with those of the miserable old man, who grew more tremulous and incoherent every moment, accusing himself in the most poignant language of severity and injustice; calling upon his son, and promising him the fullest forgiveness and affection if he only yet lived!

At length a low murmur ran through the crowd; it gave way,—some one staggered forwards. Mr. Evesham dared hardly look—but it was Robert Douglas—alive, and unwounded, though as pale and as ghastly, as if he had been entombed for a month. In an instant,

he was on his knees before his father ; in another, the old man, so tremendously stricken by remorse and anguish, “ fell upon his neck and kissed him,” but *could* not speak. He was borne home and laid upon his own bed ; but the conflict had been too strong for feeble nature to struggle through. He never spoke again, and expired quietly that night in the arms of his son !

PART III.

I am Dromio! pray let me stay!

Comedy of Errors.

THE impression which such scenes as the one I have attempted to describe, make upon the frivolous and superficial, is light—and soon passes away. The Furnivals met at breakfast the next morning, and neither by their demeanour, nor any allusion in their conversation could a stranger have guessed, that only the day before they had looked upon so dreadful a sight; or that an intimate friend, (and they had certainly allowed if not encouraged Douglas to consider himself as such), had so narrowly escaped an untimely and horrible death.

Every thought, every look of Mrs. Furnival's was devoted to cousin Sydney—and he seemed to be one of those *enfants gâtés* of fortune, who love to be made much of. He devoted himself, in his turn, to the task of pleasing Alice, and kept her in such a dazzled state of mind, with the floweriness of his talk, and the extravagance of his protestations, that she had neither time nor composure to think of the steps by which her heart was becoming fast estranged from its former and long entertained fancy. Mrs. Furnival too, was in extacies at the sight. His fortune was handsome, his person pleasing—he was acquainted with so many persons of distinction abroad and at-home;—and then she thought, with proud satisfaction, of Letty and Captain Cronie. Happy! happy woman! She relieved herself of but a small portion of the exuberance of her gladness, by writing an enormous letter to Mrs. Peters—and visions of white favours, and coaches, and bridesmaids, and all the other joyous appurtenances of a wedding, danced as vividly before her eyes, sleeping or waking, as ever they appeared to boarding school girl after she has *bought* a good

fortune, by crossing the sybil's palm with her long hoarded half-crown.

"Here is a hot muffin, cousin Sydney!—Alice, take that other one out of his way—and some marmalade, cousin, of Alice's making,"—(a white or rather an *orange* lie!)

"And so you are going across the water this morning?—Well, it is a beautiful day, and you will have a charming sail. I wish I could go too, but I must stay at home, and write letters. Bless me! how delightful! Captain Cronie—just in time for breakfast!—a cup and saucer, Potter, for Captain Cronie!—here, sit down, there's plenty of room beside Letty. How well you look, Captain! quite a colour I declare!"

Captain Cronie was obliged, but he had breakfasted.

"Quite military hours, you keep, upon my word!—are you intending to ride this morning?"

A sort of half smile passed over his lips—he was sorry—he was particularly engaged—Miss Annesley—

"Lord bless me! to think of poor Miss Annesley! so terrified as she was yesterday

—came home with a face as white as a sheet! and would have fainted if I had given her the least encouragement—ha! ha! ha! I beg your pardon, Captain, but I am in *such* spirits!—Potter, another hot muffin for Mr. Furnival,—wanted!—Well, I will come back directly—in the mean time, Letty, there’s that new song you can sing for the Captain—I am sure *he’ll* excuse the piano being out of tune!” and away she swept.

It was Miss Annesley who requested the audience. This young lady,—who, though as retiring as the most fastidious or aristocratic person could wish his children’s governess to be, was generally entirely self-possessed,—was now much confused—blushed—and hesitated once or twice before she could open the conference. At last, with much difficulty she spoke; and thanking Mrs. Furnival for her kindness and liberality since they had lived together, requested that that lady would be obliging enough to look for some one who might succeed to the situation which she must now resign, and promised to remain with her until an efficient substitute should be found.

“Upon my word, Miss Annesley! I cannot

have heard you, surely ; I was never so much amazed in all my life !”

“ I should be very sorry to have surprised you,” replied the governess a little archly, “ could I have helped it : and did I not know that sometimes surprises are not unpleasant things—but I should be still sorrier to put you to any inconvenience, and therefore”—

“ But, Miss Annesley, why must you talk of leaving us?—what will become of Hester and Carolina when you are gone ?”

“ They are fond of me, I believe, but”

“ Nay, or if it be *that*, mention your own salary, and you shall have it ; I cannot part with you.”

“ Dear Mrs. Furnival, I am much obliged by your wish to retain me, but it cannot be :—I would have acquainted you with this earlier, had I not thought that months, and even years might have elapsed before it could take place.”

“ Take place !—look at me !—I vow as red as coral—why, Miss Annesley, are you going to be married ?”

The young lady looked down and said “ Yes.”

“ And who—who ? I am rejoiced to hear it. Young women can never settle too early in life. Who is to be the happy man ?—Mr. Rigby ?”—(this was the dancing master).

“ O dear no, ma’am !”

“ Its rude to guess, I know,” continued her voluble patroness, “ but who ever *can* it be ? —Mr.—Mr. Evesham ?—O yes !—it must be Mr. Evesham !—delightful !—so good and so gentle !—so considerate !—the very man of all others !—Let me run and tell the girls—but how sly you have been !”

“ Pray stay one moment—we have been so undecided in our plans—it was but this morning—that the news of his cousin Sir Hector Cronie’s death”—

“ Cronie !—*our* Captain Cronie !—*what* did you say ?”

Miss Annesley made no reply, save a blush.

“ Letty’s Captain Cronie !—speak—tell me at once !—it can’t be !”

“ It is as strange to me as it can be to you, now that it is really settled ; but we have been engaged for these many months.”

“ *Dare* you tell me so ?—what a dupe have

I been ! such a thing was never heard of in a decent house before ! I wonder you can look me in the face after such clandestine doings—and he too, the hypocrite ! to pretend to come sneaking here, after Miss Furnival ! it makes me mad to think of it !—and Mrs. Peters, and cousin Sydney, what will they think of it ?”

“ I am sorry to see you angry, madam ; but I think that when you are cool, you will acquit me of having given you any just cause.”

“ Just ! to be carrying on such a thing, and nobody seeing or knowing a word about it ! I wonder how you can have the assurance to say so !”

Miss Annesley replied with some animation ; “ We were both of us particularly careful that no one should guess our secret, and if Hector did make use of the *entrée* to your house, it might be wrong ;—yet I think the circumstances in which we were placed excuse it ; and beyond this, I am sure that you must acquit him of any ungentlemanly conduct.”

“ I can think of nothing but your artfulness, and when I was praising you up to every one as such a treasure !—O ma’am, I would not

have you remain here another hour, to inconvenience yourself or the Captain;—I would not for the world. I will go myself and acquaint him that you are free!” and she strode majestically towards the door.

“Nay, Mrs. Furnival, do not let us part in anger; and by this time, I believe, Hector will have acquainted my friends Letitia and Alice.”

“Hector! *our* Captain Cronie! and *your friends* Letitia and Alice! indeed, I am amazed at your audacity! But it is of no consequence, not of the least, ma’am! good bye to you! and I wish you all health and happiness,”—and with a groan of mortification, she burst from the parlour, ran up into her own dressing room, locked the door, and vented her chagrin in a violent fit of sobbing. So fair a castle as she had built! and to be destroyed by a governess! how could it be expected that she was to endure such an event with anything like patience?

But the same spirit of activity which had urged her to plan and to hope, ere long came to her aid and comfort. She knew that Letty had not very quick feelings, and some one else

might be found more suitable and handsomer than the late object of her ambition. Then too, it would be impolitic in her to seem disappointed;—it would argue that expectations had been entertained, and that was always a great disadvantage to a young woman; and if the scandalous world got hold of such an idea, it might combine it with the supposed ill-usage of Robert Douglas, and do an infinity of mischief. As to the letter she had written to Mrs. Peters, what a blessing it was that she lived at Towcester, whence any tales she might spread would hardly reach to —— ! so that, all things considered, it was better to gain some credit for keeping Miss Annesley's secret, than to raise a riot because the Captain had fallen short in what was expected from him. Last of all came the puzzling question of what would cousin Sydney think?—but as no meditation could devise a means of blinding him or evading his natural wonder, Mrs. Furnival wisely resolved “that as she could get no good by thinking, she would think no more about it;” and thus, by the operation of her reason, restored to her wonted glossiness, she re-

appeared in the family circle, and even forced her complaisance so far as to congratulate Miss Annesley, and to request that in remaining or departing she would consult her own convenience—Hester and Carolina were now grown to such an age, that it was hardly worth while to engage another governess for them. She tried too, to say some flourishing thing or other to the bridegroom expectant, but to this degree of hypocrisy she could not attain ; and he was compelled to carry away his beloved from under the shelter of her protection without the benefit of her good wishes.

Now then, all her hopes were concentrated upon the affairs of Alice and cousin Sydney, and these prospered to her heart's content. He was not slack in speaking his mind explicitly, and requesting, with an impatience which did him honour, that the marriage might be allowed to take place without any unnecessary delay ; “ he was impatient to be put into possession of so inestimable a treasure,” and the like. These words were oil and balsam to the mother's chagrined spirit. As for Alice, she made no opposition beyond a little hanging

back, a few picturesque misgivings, a little heart-soreness when she thought of Douglas. The particulars of his father's unjust will! had, by this time, been noised abroad, and some wandering fancy that it was not generous to break with one whose fortunes were fallen, *did*, sometimes, cross her mind to disturb its dreams of approaching happiness. But these moments were few and far between, and when she had experienced the last spasm of self-reproach on receiving his *pour prendre congé*, she dismissed such unpleasant thoughts from her mind, and resolved, as her mother said, "to enjoy the reasonable delight of contemplating a vista of future felicity."

At length the eve of the day on which the joyful ceremony was to take place arrived, and Mrs. Furnival, though passive on most points, had over-ruled cousin Sydney's objection to a crowd of indifferent people, and invited a select many to take leave of Alice; who, poor girl was going on the morrow, to leave her for Dorsetshire. Great sorrow was on her lips, but greater joy was in her heart, as she went to and fro receiving the condo-

lances and felicitations of sympathising friends. The happy pair, so soon to be, were sitting together in a corner, engaged in close conversation, which was, certainly, a little unpolite ; but, upon these occasions, young people are apt to be *so* engrossed ! Alice had been very low all that day, and only partially recovered by the exhibition of a white satin bonnet with clumps of orange flowers amongst beds of blonde, an absolute garden of millinery—a long veil of French lace to hide her blushes withal, and a pearl coloured satin pelisse, the simple wearing of which ought to have satisfied any young lady—even there had not been a husband into the bargain. Letty too, was not in her usual spirits,—“ her friend, Miss Annesley that was, had left town for Castle Cronie, only the day before, and Letty was as fond of her, as if they had been sisters ;” while Hester and Carolina, emancipated from the restraints of a school-room, were doing the honours of the house with great and gay zeal. The company were just standing up for a dance on the carpet, when the man servant, who was remarkable for a loud voice and a

distinct delivery, entered, and announced, “a gentleman below stairs who wished to speak with Mr. Furnival.”

“Sydney!—a gentleman to speak with you, who ever can it be?”

“The tailor, I dare say,—take the things up into my room, Potter, and say that I can see no one to night:—I am particularly engaged, am I not, Alice, my love?”

“Shall I go down and see, Sydney?” said Mrs. Furnival. “Potter surely knows the tailor when he sees him.”

“O, by no means, if you please ma’am; desire him to send up his name,” said the reverend gentleman, a little uneasily.

Potter disappeared, but returned almost immediately.

“If you please, Sir, the gentleman will not send his name up stairs,” and says, “he *must* see you, and *to-night*!”

“Pshaw! how tiresome!—some nonsense or other! I can’t go down to him.”

“But I can, Sydney,” said Mrs. Furnival; “I protest I am curious to know who it can be.”

“And, Sir,” interrupted Potter, who never gave a message by halves, he said, “that if you did not come down to him, he must come up to you.”

“O by all means, Potter,” said his mistress, “go down, and give the gentleman Mrs. Furnival’s compliments, and hopes he will do her the favour of joining her circle.”

“No—no—no,” interposed Sydney, turning ashy pale as he spoke, “I will go to him myself, and get rid of him, whoever he be.”

“And, Sydney, bring your friend up stairs when you have disposed of your business—he will have no objection to a quadrille, I dare say. Pray, gentlemen and ladies, stand up! Mr. Sherlock, may I beg of you to lead Letty to the piano;—I wonder who it can be that wants Sydney at this time of night; can you guess, Alice?” whispered she to her daughter.

“I?—O dear mamma! I don’t pretend to be intimate with his private concerns yet.”

“No partner, Mr. Gillibrand?—I am afraid that you will hardly prevail upon Alice to stand up with you to night,—and to-morrow—Well, it won’t do to be sorrowful! and besides

she must wait for her cousin—perhaps you will accept of *me* though, if I have not forgotten all my steps.—Hark! they are talking very loud below!—what *can* it mean?—Women, you see, Mr. Gillibrand, are always curious,—the same all the world over!—To think of me standing up in a quadrille! what would poor dear Furnival say if he could see me?”

Now, to relieve the curiosity of those, who, like Mrs. Furnival, “wondered who it could be that wanted cousin Sydney at that time of night,” we will accompany him down stairs. Slowly and tremulously did he descend from step to step, and when he reached the dining-room door, he paused for a moment ere he could summon resolution to enter;—there was, as far as he could see by the glow from the fire reflected by the crimson walls, a gentleman standing on the hearth-rug.

“Come in, and shut the door,” said a stern voice.

“I—I—Lord bless me, Mr. Evesham! is it you? how you frightened me?”

“Now, Sir,” said the clergyman, advancing

determinedly, and seizing the terrified young man by his collar, "tell me at once, what are you about here, and what have you to say for yourself?"

Cousin Sydney dropped upon his knees as suddenly as if he had been wounded;—"For God's sake, Sir!—leave me; say nothing about it! let me alone only till to-morrow, and I will give you every satisfaction you may require,—only till to-morrow Sir! have mercy upon me!"

"Till to-morrow, you villain!" cried the clergyman vehemently, "till the mischief is done!—No, Sir! I will call for instant help, and deliver you as an impostor into the hands of justice, if you do not at once tell me who you are and whence you come; you are found out, remember!—If you stir a step till you have told me every word, I will execute my threat that very instant."

"But Mr. Evesham! dear Sir!" moaned out the detected knave, "only till to-morrow!"

"I will not wait another moment," answered the clergyman, whose stratagem had succeeded

beyond his fullest expectations, "tell me, in the first place, where is the real Mr. Furnival?"

"In France, I believe Sir, but"—

"Go on! or take the consequences!—my hand is on the bell!—and who are you?—another struggle, and"—

"My name is Barton."

"I thought so—Barton, is it?—and a pretty scoundrel you are!—and where from?"

"Birmingham!—pray let me get up!"

"Not till I am satisfied—well, and how came you to know any thing of Mr. Furnival?"

"We were passengers in the Ajax."

"Ah—I see!—from New York—and what might you have been doing at New York?"

"Travelling for orders, Sir."

"More fools they who trusted you. Well Sir, and what next?—what put it into your head to personate Mr. Furnival?"

A voice was heard at the door—"Cousin Sydney."

"Say that you cannot come; or....." whispered the clergyman authoritatively.

"I will come presently," croaked out the prostrate hero.

“ Dear me !—well—I suppose I must wait.”

“ Poor woman ! she will know soon enough !” said Mr. Evesham with feeling ;—“ and now to the point, Sir, time is precious ; what put it into your head, I say, to play such a trick as this, upon a respectable family ?”

“ Mr. Furnival himself, Sir,—you hurt my throat so !—he gave me his letters and luggage to deliver for him ; we had become quite intimate on the voyage.”

“ And why did not the silly fellow deliver them himself ?”

“ He was met, upon his landing, by a letter, summoning him without delay into France, and so”—

“ And so—this scandalous piece of roguery is the consequence ? I see it all ! and why you have been in such a wonderful hurry,” and he gave the knave another shake. “ Well Sir, you see you are unmasked ! Now if you will go away quietly at once, I will promise you, for this young lady’s sake that there shall be no further inquiry made into the matter, and no charge laid against you for opening Mr. Furnival’s trunks, etc. etc. If you resist,

if you ever show your face within these four walls again, you shall be punished, as far as the utmost law can do it. There is the door, sirrah ! I think that you will never preach for me again—and your text too, *Lying lips are an abomination !* Get out, Sir ! without a word.”

“ Cousin Sydney, we are quite impatient,”—said Mrs. Furnival, half opening the door.

“ Do not come in for Heaven’s sake !” cried Barton eagerly, struggling hard to free himself from Mr. Evesham’s grasp, “ here is a madman !”

“ Madman !” shrieked Mrs. Furnival, “ Mr. Gillibrand, Mr. Sherlock, gentlemen, come down ! help ! a madman ! O Lord ! how shocking ! I shall go into fits I declare !”

“ It is only I—Mr. Evesham,” said the divine very quietly ; still keeping a firm hold upon Barton’s coat.

“ He is mad, I tell you !” shouted the impostor, “ put him out at once ! or he will do himself or some one else a mischief ! do not listen to him, put him out !”

“ You, Sir ?” said Mrs. Furnival, venturing a nearer peep, when she heard Mr. Evesham’s

voice, "and what are you making all this disturbance about? surely, Mr. Evesham, you are not mad!"

The good man, in spite of his emotion, could not help smiling at the question. "I have at least, sense enough left to prevent serious mischief being done:—this young man, Madam"—

"Do you mean cousin Sydney?"

"No more cousin Sydney than I am, unless he has two names! Clergymen do not usually travel for the house of Rasp and Sharples, Cutlers, Birmingham, as this card testifies, which he has just dropped from his pocket: and if you want further proof, compare his signature with the real Mr. Furnival's,—but take care of Miss Alice, some of you,—she will faint, I am afraid."

"My poor child! my dear child!" cried Mrs. Furnival, spreading her substantial arms round the damsel, after the fashion of the wings of a brooding hen; "can this be true? Pray, Mr. Gillibrand—Letty—help me!—she is gone! and as for you, Sir," and she cast a furious look on her son-in-law elect, "please the Lord,

I will see who you are, when I come down stairs again !”

But to wait for this formed no part of the impostor’s plan. He saw that his game was up, his fraud detected. Springing into the hall with the rapidity of lightning, he seized a hat,—and before any one had recovered presence of mind, so much as to attempt to hinder him, he was out of the house, and half way down the street.

Mr. Evesham, it must be confessed, was absolutely dismayed at the success of his scheme. It is true that his suspicions, which were with the utmost difficulty excited, had been, for some days, fully aroused ; and when once set upon the watch, no eye could be more acute or vigilant than his. The strange hurry of Cousin Sydney’s wooing, the very unclerical omission of one or two prayers in the liturgy, when he had officiated in the pulpit, his ignorance of some points of family history with which he should have been acquainted, and a certain bluster of manner, a sure sign of cowardice and ill assurance, had been all noted and put together by the good old clergyman, whose

observation was sharpened by his indignation at the ill-treatment Robert Douglas had experienced. Cousin Sydney too, was very shy in his manner towards the divine, and had been caught by the latter, interrupting himself in—it *could* not be an oath, but it sounded very like one : and silly, silly Mrs. Furnival had pressed for no settlement on her daughter, although the wedding day was fixed,—“ Cousin Sydney’s honour ! she was sure that he would do every thing that was handsome, and *she* was not mercenary, thank Heaven !”

Mr. Evesham, I said, remarked all these extraordinary circumstances, and was haunted by the most restless suspicions ; and though often tempted to abandon his researches by an unwillingness to interfere or to pry into the concerns of others, he could not help returning again and again, under the panoply of his ecclesiastical character, to watch and to consider, and to determine that Alice should have fair play. So came on the wedding-day, and, almost in a fever betwixt his fancies, that cousin Sydney was not what he should be, and his fears, lest he *might* prove a sound and ve-

ritable clergyman, he resolved on adopting the stratagem I have related ;—it has been seen with what complete success. For the sake of the family, to whose good name it was of the utmost importance, that such a scandalous adventure should be concealed as much as possible, Barton was allowed to escape unpursued ; and, I need hardly add, reappeared no more to claim his bride !

In spite of feeling how richly Mrs. Furnival's folly had merited chastisement, Mr. Evesham could not help pitying her bewilderment and horror, when the glaring fact was fully before her, that she had ruined the hopes of a faithful and talented man, for the sake of an adventurer. Her self reproach was, indeed, almost more than she could bear. So kind as she had been to him ! and that he should turn out a traveller for a cutler's house, (for Rasp and Sharples, when written to, acknowledged the connection, and expressed some surprise at Barton's non-appearance ;) and the preparations which she had made, and the triumph with which she had trumpeted the match among their friends—were each of them, so

many additional drops of gall in the cup of mortification ! As for Alice, she did not suffer a tithe of what her mother endured : she had been merely passive, and after a week's weeping, was ready for any other venture. Mrs. Furnival, however, smarted so bitterly under the consciousness of her own credulity, and fears of " the world's dread laugh," that she snatched at the pretext of Letty's ill health, let her house, sold her furniture, and removed " herself and flock" to Bath, there to begin anew the task of cultivating society and establishing her daughters.

My tale is not quite concluded. We must follow the steps of Robert Douglas, whose foreign travel was crowned with the double success of high advancement in his art, and the diversion of his mind from its regrets. We must not, indeed, tarry to count up the *studios* he visited, nor the pictures he painted, the cardinals who purchased them, or the *cognoscenti* who criticised them, but, skipping over the space of five years, restore the artist to his own country. It was on a certain fine morning in the month of June, that he stole into the

exhibition room at Somerset House, and was listening as he passed, to the praises bestowed by an admiring group, upon a splendid picture of Medea, after the murder of her children, whereupon he had expended many a day's thought and labour,—when he felt a light finger laid upon his arm. He turned round, and lo! Mrs. Furnival stood before him, looking younger, livelier, and more gaily dressed than ever.

“ Why, Mr. Douglas ! how you stare ? welcome back to old England again ! I am heartily glad to see you ! ”

Resentment had long faded from his mind ; and a “ kent ” face, and a cordial voice, are worth something to one who has been many years an exile. He shook the proffered hand heartily, “ And how are you, Mrs. Furnival ? ”

“ O Lord ! well I declare !—how droll that I must tell you myself ! Lady Dilton, if you please !—Sir Gabriel— ”

A tall wizened man, curried by long exposure to a Bengal sun, obeyed her call.

“ Sir Gabriel Dilton ! this is my old friend

Mr. Douglas, who painted—Ah, well! we will say nothing about old times!”

Sir Gabriel gave a grin, a scrape, and a chatter—then put up his glass, and screwed up his face again, and turned away to admire the Medea.

“O that splendid picture of yours! Sir Gabriel cannot take his eyes off it, and would buy it, I am sure, only we lead so unsettled a life, and it is rather too large to carry about. Carolina, this is your old friend Mr. Douglas.” Carolina had blown into a pale modish looking London girl.

Robert now thought it only civil to enquire after the other members of her family.

“Did you say Letty? why, where have you been, never to have heard of her marrying Sir Thomas Poltrot, my Sir Gabriel’s first wife’s brother. She is very well; they are down at Poltrot Place, in Northamptonshire.”

“And Miss Alice,” continued Douglas stoutly, “I hope she is well.”

“Ah, poor Alice! no! she has hardly had the luck of her sisters. Hester married the

first;—it seems that I must tell you all the news,—and is now the Honourable Mrs. Sankey Smythe; she went with her husband to France, in the ambassador's suite. Poor Alice! Mr. Gillibrand left her a widow with two children, scarcely a year ago;—but Sir Gabriel, you must surely have had enough of that picture, unless you mean to eat it. You will dine with us to-morrow, Douglas, won't you? I assure you, I hear of nothing so much as your Medea. Come then, Sir Gabriel:—and do you go and see Pasta, it's her crack character,—go with us, we have a box."

"Thank you, and where shall I hear of Mrs. Gillibrand?"

"You are very good, I will give you her direction to-morrow. We are living at No. 29, Chester Terrace, Regent's Park."

Douglas excused himself from the dinner, not a little amused at the extra coat of plating, which his old acquaintance's manners seemed to have received. She was now, obviously, in her own opinion, a woman of fashion, and he judged rightly in concluding that the Nabob

must have had a double gilt bait, even to hook so willing a prey as herself.

But poor Alice ! the merchant's widow, neglected by her foolish relations—Robert's heart yearned with compassion when he thought of her. Business, ere long, led him to his native town ; and he lost no time in seeking her out. He found her in miserable lodgings, in a dull street, forsaken by all her former gay acquaintances, left in straitened circumstances, her beauty all gone, and her health entirely shattered. Her selfish mother and sisters whispered and laughed significantly when they heard of this visit, and thought that he would be infatuated enough to renew his old suit, and to invite her to share the competence, which he had now so fair a prospect of realizing.

They were, however, mistaken : his love had been too entirely eradicated ever to be cherished into life again. It is true that the meeting was full of embarrassment on both sides, and pain to one of the parties ; but no allusion was made to their former compact. He spoke to her, as a friend who compassio-

nated the desolateness of her situation : and if his kind words did kindle any fancies in her breast, it was but for a moment ; for she was now experienced enough to read in his quiet demeanour and brotherly speech, that he had forgotten how to address her in the language of love. Her family had abandoned her to a hard strife with an unkind fortune—left her, a melancholy wreck of youth and gaiety. The sight stirred his indignation ; she told him herself, with all the prolixity of disappointment, the conclusion of the story of the false Sydney, and how their real cousin had never appeared, having written to them from Marseilles, within a few weeks after the detection of the counterfeit, to announce to his relations, that there was now little probability of their meeting soon. He had been summoned thither to attend the death bed of his tutor and guardian, and was now on the point of settling abroad for life, (further accounts added) with the purpose of marrying that tutor's orphan daughter. Upon hearing this unwelcome news, Mrs. Furnival had urged Alice to accept Mr. Gillibrand, who had given a most convincing proof of the

strength of his regard by following her to Bath to prefer his suit : and she, heart-sick and listless, allowed herself to be persuaded into the match.

How little had she thought, in former days, that she should find the last solace of her life, in pouring out the tale of its griefs to her rejected lover ! the only friend save good Mr. Evesham, who did not desert her, in her fallen fortunes. A fever, brought on by mortification of spirit and a long neglected cold, mercifully cut short her days ; and her orphan children were, one of them claimed by Mr. Evesham,—for her heartless family allowed others to perform their duty—and the other, a little girl, the image of her mother, was adopted by Robert ; who found in the care of her, and her grateful affection for the same, the pleasure of his life, and the joy of his old age.

THE STREETS—No. 3.

SOUNDS OF A SUMMER'S EVENING—
SUNDAY IN TOWN.

THOSE, whose home is some quiet country retreat, some white cottage, for instance, with a high thatched roof, and small casement windows garlanded round with honey-suckles and roses, and, if the owner be a fancier of flowers, with one or two rarer creeping plants,—the parlours whereof overlook a lawn, shut out from the road by a rich screen of flowering shrubs, and evergreens, encroaching promontory-like upon the grass, and so tall, that, though the elms behind them are middle-aged well-grown trees, their transparent upper foliage is alone visible;—those, I say, who

own such a tenement as this,—and, on some fresh May morning are cheered by the warble of spring birds, that clear juicy sound, so magical in dispelling any “shadow of annoyance,” who hear the merry breeze bearing its part in the concert, and the sound of the tiny feet of the choristers, as they alight on the narrow flagged terrace before the window—may well hug themselves in the possession of such luxuries, and compassionate the dwellers in a town, with its days of dust, and nights of noise;—and, if they have occasion to seek the city,—deafened by the ceaseless roll of wheels, the barbarous cries of the hawkers, and the nasal song of the ballad-monger—may be excused if they fret and long for the delicious, but not soundless quiet of their fair homes. For even the veriest town bird, whose heart is with his treasure, will, at times, sicken as with a calenture for the repose and balminess of a night in the country; and if, like myself, he have passed entire summers, and scarcely seen a rose on its bush, or heard the reviving sound of running water,—if he be one to whom the calendar of flowers is

a sealed book, and the feeling of fresh grass under foot almost forgotten,—he may be forgiven if,—on some sultry evening of June, when he has not the heart to stir abroad, and the measured tramp of feet upon the burning pavement, and the glare reflected from the window-panes on the opposite side of the street, break in, perforce, upon his retirement—he give way to a temporary despondency and discontent, and vent his yearnings somewhat after this fashion,

O summer air !

Thou dost on thy pinions bear
 Murmurs from deep woods, and strains
 Brooks have taught thee, on the plains
 Where didst fly on golden wing
 Balm and music gathering ;
 Why—when green fields wooed thy stay,
 And thy call did flowers obey,
 Springing up beneath thy feet,
 Bright and plentiful and sweet,
 Comest thou here ?—O spirit rare !
 What hast thou to do with care,

Soft summer air ?

Thou knowest nought
 Of days, wherein the hand hath wrought

From the dawning, until night
Sets the taper's fire a-light ;
For the bee, that busy one,
Ends his toil, when sinks the sun,
And their wings the wood-birds fold,
Ere the west hath lost its gold,
• Wilt thou leave then, hive and tree,
Where thy playmates sleeping be,
To come to me ?

Thou knowest nought
Of treasure by the watcher sought ;
If of gold thou dreamest indeed,
'Tis of king-cups on the mead ;
If of pearls—it is the dew ;
If of sapphires—violets blue ;
Nor their wealth thou needs must seek,
With tired hand and pallid cheek,
Like his, whose cell thou enterest now,
And breathest round his burning brow
Thy music low.

Then go thou back
Upon thy glowing joyous track ;—
To me thou dost too sadly tell
Of haunts in boyhood loved so well ;
Lonely valley, dim and cool,
Glassy, water-lilied pool,
Rich turf carpet under trees

White with wood anemonies ;—
O to wander there again !—
Go !—thou canst not melt my chain !
Nor the heart-sick captive bear
To his home, so far, so fair !
Soft summer air !—

Yes—after a long day's toil at the desk, a summer evening, spent in town, is a dismal thing ;—especially if you have to go so far to seek for fresh fields and hanging trees, that their distance discourages you, when jaded and out of spirits, from making the attempt. At such a time, all the advantages, all the privileges, to be enjoyed only in a city,—its temptations to active exertion, the superiority of its society—are forgotten or undervalued : and the old innocent love of Nature seems to inundate the mind with a flood of yearnings and reminiscences, not to be withstood by reason — or gainsayed by worldly wisdom. Then the weary one looks back with inexpressible tenderness towards the days, when the first sight of the ocean was an excitement almost too great to be borne ; when the child stole out at night-fall to watch the moon rising

round above the cottage roof and the brown wood beyond, and danced with delight on finding the silver bell of the first snow-drop upon the stained grass-plot, or in the dark garden bed. Then self-reproach grows busy, and paints that child as he is now, sophisticated by his intercourse with the world ;—counts up a long catalogue of pure feelings vitiated, of right principles distorted, and truths sneered as it were into the lumber corners of the heart—and the man, ashamed and sad hearted, contemplates the doleful picture which she has drawn, till he forgets that it is possible she *may* in the warmth of the moment, have been a little unjust, a little intolerant, that she *may* have drawn the least in the world of a caricature of the evils of a city life, without showing any of its good, even in the back ground.

But if to such fatigue of body, and mournfulness of spirit, be added the further trial of feeble health, how immense, at such a time, appears the pre-eminence of the country over the town in the eyes of the fastidious invalid ; who imagines that its quiet, and its purity, and its leafiness would work an immediate cure—bring

coolness to his feverish head, and sleep to the eyes that ache with wakefulness. If he be sofa-ridden, he tantalizes himself with thinking how he might be wheeled to some open window, overlooking a flower-garden or a field;—and cheat time of its weariness by watching the wind swaying the meadow-waves of rich and fragrant clover, or the sun lighting on some blossomy spot of peculiar richness in the parterre:—to say nothing of the gambols of birds, bees and butterflies. He could breathe the fresh air—unloaded by dust, unpolluted by evil odours: and should he have reached so miserable a pitch of sensitiveness as to be wearied by the worky-day sounds of common life, he knows that there, and there only, he could enjoy the luxury of one day *of perfect rest* out of the seven, one period of morning and evening whose passage is alone marked by the sound of church bells softened by distance. O the weariness of a Sunday in town! when you would give a fortune if you had it, to purchase an escape from the perpetual jangle of chimes, and the noise of the gay holiday groups who pass your window without ceasing, from

morning till night, and the stream of whose talk is never still! The activity of the week has now merged in gaudy pleasure-taking;—the street beneath you is a constant phantasmagoria, in which almost every puppet is animated by the same spirit of conversation and finery—O the weariness of a Sunday in town!

“Patience!” whispers a gentle voice, close to the ear, “you must surely be bilious, to speak of the world without in such a railing and uncharitable tone! You have forgotten how many hearts are gladdened by the sunshine of this glorious evening, — how many busy ones there are, who to-day leave their looms and forges, and lock up their houses, and come abroad to stretch their limbs, and breathe the fresh air! You forget the cellar-dwellings in close dingy streets, where the sun shines so very scantily, and a flower was never seen: the dusty noisome garrets, where pale men and women ply some sedentary trade to minister to your luxury—and defraud themselves of their just portion of natural rest, that your fancy might not be disappointed by one hour. You forget the estate of hard working

servants hurried to and fro, from Monday morning to Saturday night, by the half dozen caprices of as many masters—of weary clerks and porters, who have been broiled in the sun, or withered by the bitter wind, by the side of some dock, or have been bowing themselves into a consumption over some ponderous ledger. Remember all or any of these things, Sir Hypochondriac, and be patient with the relaxation of this holiday, if you cannot be indulgent.”

Some such considerations as these may smooth the hours of the invalid's town Sunday, even should his irritable spirit be rebuked by no higher thoughts than those of this reasonable benevolence. But then, again, Fancy, often busy to contrive mischief, sets forth in quest of others, like himself, imprisoned—and expends its sympathy upon their desolate captivity. I shall never forget the pale face of a poor young fellow, whom I used to pass every day for many weeks, and whose constant position at the same window, dressed in the same deshabelle of loose cravat, and grey dressing gown, told a woeful tale of bad health, abandon-

ment by his friends, and a lack of pursuit and occupation. It was a face which spoke of nothing more than of melancholy and ennui;—give it colour and life, and you could fancy such an one surmounting the shoulders of some Jehu, famous for the taming of restive horses, or shining out in full glory, beneath the shelter of a neat jockey cap. I was sure that the tenant of No. 23, ——— street, must be country born. I had once assigned his *triste* look to a man of business, who was pining for his ledger and circulars ; but there was not enough calculation in the eyes to fulfil the character : and a country gentleman I accordingly resolved that he *must* be ;—and pitied him accordingly, as evening after evening, I watched him looking more and more woe-begone : a sort of melancholy centre, round whom street vagabonds swarmed, for whom dancing-dogs skipped their painful dances, and hurdy-gurdies droned out their most favourite, *ergo* most hackneyed airs. At last I missed him—whether his doctor had dismissed him to health, or the church-yard, I never could discover—I suspect the latter : and have been sometimes

pricked by conscience, that I did not once break through the ordinances of ceremony,—and offer my own poor powers of entertainment, in default of better, to the deserted being whose confinement bore so heavily upon him. What a long chapter, of such good intentions which come too late to be of any use, would every honest man's diary supply!

But if we carry the invalid one step out of his chamber, our discontent at the bustle and publicity of the streets of a large town, reaches its zenith. What can be more miserable to the frail creature full of the fancies of convalescence, who would like to step out upon a lawn a hundred times a day, than hot flags and inquisitive passers by:—who, as they take the measure of his crutch, and stare at his haggard face, shake their heads and say aloud—“ Ah! poor young man! he'll never get over this!” What agony is more desperate than is awakened by the sight of some well known bore and button holder coming deliberately towards you, and, as he comes, fixing his eyes steadily upon you all the while, as though he had hardly confidence in your feebleness

rendering you his sure prey—some person curious in sick rooms, and minute in the chapter of operations ; who can talk by the hour of every malady under the sun, “ and has the misfortune to belong to the most delicate family in all ——shire !” And to know that there is no hope of escaping the friendly inquiries and condolences of such an individual ;—to watch his out-spread hand—his lips already framing a question, — why, it is as bad as marking the approach of a cloud of dust which which is to stifle you ; or, on some broiling day of June, seeing some seven straight shadowless miles of road before you, which, you have the satisfaction of knowing, that you needs must travel over on the top of a slow stage coach.

But the soft voice speaks again—and would stop our querulousness by recalling the thousand alleviations to the sufferings and weariness of sickness, which are in the reach of the town invalid alone. It counts up the momentary caprices gratified as soon as formed ; the treasures of books brought in daily variety to the sufferer’s couch ; it pictures, in pleasant

language, the faces of friends who looked in upon us every morning with soft steps and words of cheer, and news enough of the outer world, to keep our sympathies alive, without making us ready to expire with envy. How delightful are such tokens of kindly remembrance!—how sweetly did the sense that we were not forgotten neutralize the bitterness of repining, that others were abroad acting and enjoying things in which we might not hope to share;—how eagerly did we count the moments till we should hear their welcome feet upon the stairs again!—how gratefully do we appreciate the delicacy that restrained the exuberance of their spirits as they sat beside us!—Let us leave the invalid in this better mood of mind.

Our sea-port town is kept alive, at this season, by none of that gaiety which in the metropolis, Fashion and Parliament protract from March till mid-summer. Strange as is the mixture of winter amusements with summer temperature,—strange as it is to see, as I have seen, the astonished setting sun flaring in among the foot lights and chandeliers of the

Opera House, the loneliness of a town forsaken in summer, as a residence, by all the free part of its inhabitants who love to exchange their close mansions for the farm-house in the midst of its garden, or the cottage on the sea-shore, is, to my thinking, infinitely more grievous than this forgetting of the seasons. For my part, (although I know I am making an avowal which some will call selfish), as my lot is cast in a town, I would gladly not be reminded of another state of being; I would fain, if possible, bar out such discontented consciousness of imprisonment as is awakened by letters received from parties gone to pleasure themselves among the wild scenery of the Highlands, or the rich variety of Devonshire—every paragraph whereof glows with renovated health and excited spirits—or by the doleful visions of houses shut up, of empty streets and abandoned squares, in which the foot of the dull barrel organist is alone heard as he plods his rounds; grinding as he goes some drowsy tune made hateful by long repetition, in the vain hope of gleaning his old harvest of coppers from “the young ladies and gentlemen”.

in the balconies. The market dressed up with bouquets of flowers and baskets of fruit reminds us sadly enough that the earth is teeming with beauty which our eyes are not to behold, without the further mementos of silence and neglect, in places where lately was heard the laugh of children, the hum of men, and the thousand other evidences of "something going on."

It is at this melancholy time, of all others, that the hermit's ear becomes alive to the sounds of the streets; that he learns to distinguish the diapason of one hurdy-gurdy from that of another, and the *cadenzas* of a broom-girl from those of her rival. The whole family of street cries now becomes particularly odious; the voice of the purchaser of rags, who can hold the same note from one end of a long street to the other—the barbarous shouts of fruit women and fish wives, are aggravated into nuisances which can hardly be endured. And, in the midst of all this disgust, what associations are ever and anon wakened by street music! Lord Byron broke off one of his delightful letters—to listen to a waltz played in

the street beneath his window, for the tune recalled him to the past enjoyments and scenes of a London season, during which the melody had been a favorite—and only adds—“ Music is a strange thing!” Again, in the *Diary of an Ennuyée*, how touching is the passage which describes her listening to “Di Piacer” ground out of a wretched hand organ beneath the windows of her hotel at (I think) Marseilles, and remembering the brilliant scene where she first heard that triumphant melody,—where she was all light-hearted and full of hope, and he perhaps at her side, for the love of whom she was now mournfully wasting away! How touching are these traits of real life and fiction!—the stern seared-hearted poet, turning aside in the midst of his storm and sarcasm to remember the past, half with regret, half with disdain;—and the desolation of the broken-hearted girl, whom the strain sadly reminds that she must hope for nothing but rest in the grave!

How often, indeed, has some familiar air, the “ Una Volta” from *La Cenerentola*, or “ Durandante e Belerma,” or some yet simpler tune, carried us back to the voice and guitar from

which we first heard it, and charmed our exhausted feelings with tender remembrances and agreeable visions. And if we look out, to bestow a penny upon the itinerants who have thus, for a moment, transported us back into fairy land,—how does the sight of the gaunt listless figure of the musician, or of the southern complexion and haggard features of his wife, set off by her fantastic head-gear,—with a little child at her side, bearing, poor thing! a tambourine, or leading in a string a doleful looking dog in a masquerade dress—how does such a group as this move our heart with a strange pity for those who wander from their own bright lands, and, amid toil and degradation, endeavour to pick up a pittance wherewith to purchase a noon's meal and a night's lodging! I shall never forget the feelings of this nature excited in my mind, by hearing the Tyrolese minstrels for the first time, one sultry evening in August. It was their third visit to this place; our grandees were either absent from town, or had satiated their curiosity; the concert room therefore was indifferently filled with a third rate audience;—and before them, and exposed to

the full fire of their vulgar remarks, stood these mountain children pouring out the melodies of their own land, every tone of which, one would have thought, must have spoken to them of their glorious Alpine landscapes :—with snow peaks in the distance, and in the foreground, green meadows and substantial farm-houses, comely cows and cherry trees crushed down by their weight of fruit. It may be that custom had deadened their remembrance, or that the hope of a return to these sweet native scenes sustained them; but upon me their singing had a saddening effect, which I could not cast aside for many days, and which wrought itself off in a string of verses, of which the two following perhaps are the best.

Did not your snow-crowned mountains seem

To Heaven yet nearer than before ?

Did you not—when you left them—deem

The voice of every bird and stream

Was sweeter than of yore?—

The sky was brighter than of old,

The lakes more clear, the woods more green?—

Did not the sun-set seem to fold

The earth in robe of richest gold

That ever eye had seen ?

And you could leave so fair a clime !
 Perchance 'twas in the summer time
 You looked your last—O simple ones !
 The mountain patriarchs' wandering sons,
 How can you sing their songs, and bear
 Afar to breathe the stranger's air?

* * * * *

And you—ye wake a thought of pain
 Which turns mine eyes to earth,—I see
 How one stern despot, sordid gain,
 Bows to his mercenary reign
 The men of low degree.
 And they must toil before his throne
 To his harsh mandate bending low,
 Till age has with its silver strown
 Their clustering locks—and Time has thrown
 His wrinkles o'er their brow.
 And you must come from lands afar,
 And yoked to his triumphal car,
 Breathe out your simple mountain songs
 To heartless ears and critic throngs,
 Who know not, heed not how ye yearn,
 To your own vallies to return !

But we must not end in this pensive mood.
 Let us think how pleasant it is to hear,—as we
 sit with opened windows, to catch the cool
 night breeze—some chord of men's voices pass-

ing along the street, and dying away with that peculiar delicacy which the open air imparts to the coarsest musical sound ; let us recal the delight excited by hearing two harps suddenly strike up, played in such entire concord and perfect time, that it was next to impossible to refrain from acknowledging their influence with our feet, in spite of the fever heat of the air and the weariness of our limbs ; let us make ourselves merry with remembering the grotesque tunes which herald a peculiar Punch of our acquaintance, tempting the old and utilitarian to look out and laugh at the lawless doings of that independent, thought not very respectable character ;—and if none of these will avail—let us turn round to the pianoforte, and listen to a voice, clear as a silver bell, and gay as a lark's—singing a ballad by that best of all modern songsters, Barry Cornwall, whose cheering *refrain* is :

“—’Tis better we laugh than weep.”

THE MISSIONARY AND THE ACTRESS.

A TALE.

PART I.

THE ADOPTED CHILDREN.

“ She—O Susannah !—to this world belongs !”

CRABBE.

To those who love to contemplate variety, and are more desirous in their intercourse with the world, to meet with difference of character than uniformity of creed, it will be often a cause of regret, that sectarian prejudices shut up entire classes within barriers as strong as those that enclose the Hebrew quarter of many continental towns: that the Church, as it were, holds up the hem of her garment to avoid

touching the robe of the Tabernacle, and that the Chapel sits apart and vents her sarcasms on the bigotry and priestcraft of the Church. It is provoking to think how much character and intelligence there must exist in a large town like ours, of which we may hardly hope to obtain a peep.

Yet sometimes the veil is drawn aside, by some stray sheep who breaks out of the charmed fold and proclaims to the world round about the peculiarities of the flock which he has left:—and the documents issued by the various bodies of religionists—the Arminian magazine of the Methodists, the Eclectic and Imperial of the Independents, and other periodicals of a similar kind,—these also throw light upon those singularities of thought and cast of mind, induced by dwelling for the most part “among one’s own people.” It was in the course of my wanderings hither and thither upon the outskirts of certain sects, aided by communications from other borderers like myself, that I became acquainted with the following circumstances belonging to the history of a family, so dispersed or destroyed, that I run no risk of

hurting the feelings of any one by bringing them before the public.

Possibly there never appeared in our sea-port town two more perfect specimens of the dissenter than John Lambwood and Esther his wife. Both were zealously attached to their own particular congregation ; and yet the religion of the one and its effects differed as widely from those of the other, as if they had belonged to different churches. He was cold, inflexible, upright and reasoning: she was equally strict,—but warm, devoted, a little superstitious, sometimes more than a little passionate. Some evil disposed neighbour had once called them Hot and Cold ; and it was remarked that, though they were agreed at heart, as if they had been fashioned of the same handful of clay,—when they were together, he hardly ever advanced a fact, which she did not dispute lovingly though earnestly ; and she scarcely broached one opinion which he did not make haste to qualify or generalize. They were proud of the situation which they occupied in their own church;—both a little impatient under a dispensation which denied to their union the blessing of children. It chanced

however, that when they had passed the middle period of life, this want was in some measure supplied by a circumstance which consigned two children—a boy and a girl—to their care.

It is a great mistake to limit the existence of romance of mind to those to whom the entire world of fiction and art is open, whose thoughts are free to range whithersoever they please. There is always abroad upon the earth a certain quantity of that high and pure spirit which has made poets, painters and sculptors; and though æras and circumstances may refuse to develope it in that form in which men call it genius, it may be distinctly recognized by the advertent under its other manifestations. And among those sects who denounce the region of beauty and imagination as a place of snares and seductions not to be trodden by christian feet, that spirit sends those fervent promptings and visions which excite men to the daring and endurance of missionary labours; it joins the delights of enterprise, the charms which sacrifice possesses to the ardent mind, (the same which have upheld so many amid the torments of martyrdom,) to the severe sense of duty. But, to my story—

There were resident in our town, at the period to which it refers, a young clergyman and his wife, whose united ages hardly amounted to five and forty years, who were bent upon the then strange and almost perilous adventure of penetrating to the remote parts of Hindostan, for the purpose of preaching the gospel there.

William Grafton and his wife Sarah “were,” as their own church records set forth, “a remarkable pair.” Both country born and country bred, they had been attached to each other ever since early childhood, with a purity and fervency of love, which, some hold, has altogether disappeared in these latter days. Their parents lived in a remote part of the county of York; a district full of yeomens’ grey stone houses, set among orchards, with here and there an ancient yew tree thrusting out its dark head among the blossoming branches of the fruit trees, and fragments of ruin startling you with their serene decay in the midst of rich meadows—a country, in short, were there was quite enough to kindle the fancy and to impress a ready spirit with that most earnest and delicious of all desires—of a close communion

with nature and its Maker. Now the young lovers were endowed with warm feelings and active imaginations; though educated in such strictness that they were hardly aware of their possession. Instead of books of poetry, they went out and read the sky together; instead of legends, they studied the two mishapen and headless statues which lay prostrate among the holly trees in farmer Grafton's east meadow: and this union of their sympathies and interests drew them so closely together, that when he was no older than twenty-one and she than eighteen, they overcame the scruples of cautious relations, and were united—for better for worse.

William Grafton had always been dedicated to the ministry, as much by his own contemplative turn of mind as by his father's purpose. He had already frequently preached in the open air among his own country folks, and assisted in the services of the nearest chapel of his sect. There was not much difficulty then, as his character was blameless, in procuring for him an appointment as pastor to a small congregation in our town. A happier pair than

he and his young wife never crossed its boundaries; the same freshness of spirit which they had nurtured among their native scenery, accompanied them through the bustle and novelty of a city life; and for awhile made the very change pleasant. They were beloved by all who knew them; Mrs Grafton within the three first years of her married life, gave birth to a son and daughter; and was renowned as the most devoted wife, the kindest hearted neighbour, and the most fortunate mother in all the congregation.

And yet, at this very time, the young couple were separately bending their thoughts towards a project which was to separate them at once and for ever from their present happy and useful estate. This was nothing short of undertaking a mission to the remoter parts of India. Their desires grew up secretly; the enchantment of a wish to wander had insinuated itself into both their hearts;—mostly into the man's, for the *mother* knew that if their purpose was to be executed it was imperatively necessary for her to resign the guardianship of her infant children into other hands. It was a hard strug-

gle,—but enthusiasm gained the victory, and became ere long a sense of duty. When once they had opened their minds to each other—struck by the coincidence of their aspirations, their purposes acquired such strength by union, that no obstacle was mighty enough to prevent their fulfilment. In short, they laid the call which they had received before the elders of their congregation; and were listened to with the utmost sympathy and such reverence as attends those, who are willing to make sacrifice of some precious thing, because they believe it to be right so to do. Not a voice opposed them, though many sighed to lose their faithful pastor and his beloved wife; and they departed under the auspices of their own missionary society—having left, (it may be imagined with how many tears, prayers and last embraces,) their children to the care of those two discreet relatives of Mrs. Grafton, who had eagerly desired to be allowed to undertake the trust.

It was a sabbath evening. John Lambwood and his wife, now grown old though not infirm, having attended the services of the day and

assembled their household for family worship, were sitting together as it was their custom to do for an hour, previous to retiring for the night. They were, both of them, more than commonly grave and silent. A large open bible was laid upon the table before them, but neither of the two had as yet looked into it; the eyes of the husband were fixed upon a profile likeness of Mrs Grafton which hung above the chimney piece, it was faded—so many years had elapsed since the original had left England—those of the wife were bent upon his face, as if she would gather his thoughts from his countenance without enquiry. At last the old man broke the long silence, and sighing deeply said: “Our dear sister little knew”—and paused.

Mrs Lambwood quietly opened the book and read: *If any man come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.* And again: *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.* “Our dear sister,” continued she, “when she entered upon her appointed work, did utterly resign the care of these chil-

dren into our hands, and we must not become weary of it, nor murmur at the crosses which appertain to it. We have perhaps desired too ardently the blessing of children, and Providence is reproving us in this very thing."

"I will use the authority of a father over her," replied her husband; "but what hath it availed hitherto? the girl is of a light and worldly spirit: nay, and I think it increases with her years. Thou wert wrong to permit that intimacy with the Worralls. I will have it broken off at once and decidedly; thou hast been too tender with her, because she is beautiful."

"And full of understanding also," interposed Mrs Lambwood, with something near akin to the eagerness of maternal pride.

"Ay—that understanding hath been allowed undue latitude. These idle poetry books, this Cowper, this Pope, I will allow no more of them; my love, liberality is not conformity to this world's frivolity."

"And yet," ventured his wife, "her brother hath been allowed the same liberty, and thou seest how different he is: this must be diver-

sity of natural character, for thou wilt not allow him to be inferior to her in capacity."

"I am amazed at thy pleading, Esther; thou wouldst absolutely excuse Theresa's levity; thou hast made her anxious after dress too."

"I, John?" replied the matron quickly, looking down upon her own sober and unornamented costume, "The child has walked in the streets and seen gay clothes—I have done no more; and she is a good child, John, though a little wilful."

"She has a lively tongue, I know; but she has used it to sneer at Thomas Proudfoot, and the good young man hath taken it much to heart."

"Well, my dear, thou wouldst not force her inclinations."

"Esther, what are her inclinations?—towards the world and the things of the world; it is her nature to take pattern by any foolishness she sees; during that unlucky six months when she was at school, there was more harm done than will be ever undone, except—and with Him there is nothing impossible!—but I will be stricter with her than I have been. I

believe that we shall hear nothing more of her parents,—whether they yet live or not. I will take up a father's authority at once."

"And yet, John, consider the evil that may accrue from over much severity."

"Severity, wife! art thou too growing latitudinarian?"

"I feel towards her like a mother," replied Esther earnestly; "she hath never been allowed many indulgences; and excepting this acquaintance with the Worralls, her own blood relations, I know not what we could take away; and if we were to forbid her from going to see them, it might I fear encrease her already strong hankering after gay company; and she looks delicate just now;—let us wait a little."

"I am not accustomed to interfere with thee, Esther; but in this thou art too remiss. I will have her dressed in a simpler fashion."

"That cannot be: the colour and fashion of her clothes is precisely the same as my own: but Providence has given her a slender waist and low shoulders, and the simplest dress becomes her. She is very beautiful, John!"

“ Her beauty is a snare to her,” replied her husband, surprised and displeased at his wife’s pertinacity, “ but from this night forward, I will be more watchful over her, and I will speak to Reuben, that he also may give her counsel.”

“ Do not, my dear John,—do not, I entreat thee, my dear husband! They love one another, and it is enough; he will have no influence over her; thou knowest he is so impetuous, and she has by much the readier wit. Nay, do not: let us not run the risk of weakening their affection by setting him over her. I will talk to her very gravely myself, and insist upon a sober demeanour, and take away from her her poetry books, and prevent her from going to the Worralls, as much as I can: but I pray thee, leave her in my hands a little longer.”

“ Well, Esther, well,” said her husband appeased by the ready compliance with his wishes, which invariably terminated every matrimonial debate: “ I will try a little longer; but as the father of a family and the elder of a congregation, I cannot allow of such idle practices any longer. It has been already declared, and I am sorry, with so much cause, that I kept no

order at home. Let us go to rest and pray that Theresa may be endowed with a greater measure of solidity of mind: trusting, that in due season, our prayers will be fulfilled."

Little dreamed Theresa that night, of the increasing strictness towards her, which her guardians were meditating;—and yet, to call those things indulgences in which she was to be stinted, would raise a smile on the face of any, save those who have been familiar with the strict household discipline of certain religious bodies. They amounted, as far as Mrs. Lambwood knew, to a great liveliness of talk, a neatness of attire which made her unfashionable costume appear becoming to her faultless figure and striking face, and a decided rejection of the distasteful courtship of Thomas Proudfoot. As for Theresa's intercourse with the Worralls—they were nearly related to her father; and Mrs. Lambwood felt that she had no right to prevent the portionless girl from creating for herself an interest in the minds of her rich and liberal kindred. But she was totally ignorant of much that passed in the mind of her adopted daughter; and had she been made

acquainted with Theresa's thoughts, could not in the least have understood their nature. The maiden was gifted with a generous and bold spirit—and a certain irregularity and originality of mind, corresponding with her cast of features, which were fascinating, though in some points, exceeding the strict proportions of beauty. Though she had been early taught to regard Mr. and Mrs. Lambwood as father and mother, on the plea that her own parents would never return to England, and that, in fact, the silence of many years made the resignation of their natural authority complete, and though she loved them well—she almost as early learned to obey them with reserves such as no child should keep from its parents—and these every day increased in number, as few and far-between glimpses of the outer world enlarged her desires and made her sensible of the narrowness of the boundaries within which she had been educated. There is a pleasure particularly flattering to the vanity, in opening the eyes of the uninstructed—and those who are willing to see, through howsoever small a cranny they have leave to peep, need never

remain in ignorance of the world around them. During a period of illness, when Mrs. Lambwood had been ordered into the country, for the benefit of change of air, Theresa had been left at a school recommended by serious people. Music and dancing, however, were taught to a few; and Shakespeare was to be found in the private book-case of the English teacher. Theresa ere long acquired a relish for all three—for the last in particular; and her occasional visits to the Worralls, a gay, careless family, who had recently come into possession of a handsome income, and though complaisant towards their friends' scruples, were troubled by few of their own—kept alive and nourished this taste for forbidden pleasure. Many an hour of reading did the delighted girl steal in the library, when she found the family from home; many a hint as to the minor ordinances of dress did her quick eye gather up; and, as her mind became daily more and more enfranchised and her taste improved, her demeanour naturally assumed that increased freedom, which had given Thomas Proudfoot so much offence, and through him her foster-father. She was now

nineteen years of age and could no longer be chidden as a child; and yet, unless some decided step was taken, it was too probable that ere long, she would break the prescribed bounds of the strict household wherein she dwelt, in some open and daring manner.

On the Monday evening after the conversation which I have recorded took place, Mrs. Lambwood was perplexed by meeting Theresa on the stairs, dressed in the utmost gaiety to which she could attain. "Thou art not going out, my love?" said she, in an interrogatory voice.

"O yes, mother, I am—I promised to spend this evening with the Worralls, if I could . . ."

"Thou shouldst have told me earlier."

"And why, dear mother?—I was not sure myself whether I should be able; but I got up at six o'clock this morning, and my father's cravats are all finished."

"Why—Theresa!"

"Every one of them, mother; and marked, and laid upon his dressing table; and I have heard poor little Ruth all her lessons—and read my fifty pages of history,"—and she might

have added, her twenty pages of "As you like it" from a precious volume which nestled among her discarded muslins,—“so that I think I have fairly earned a right to take a little pleasure this evening.”

“Pleasure!” replied her mother^r gravely; “thou art far too eager after pleasure! and thy father thinks that I have permitted thee in too much liberty.”

“Nay, mother,—if you only knew. . . .” she checked herself, wisely remembering that Mrs. Lambwood never admitted the validity of an appeal to any standard save her own;—“but I must go, I am already late: you will send Reuben for me at the usual time.”—And ere Mrs. Lambwood could recover from her astonishment at the good-humoured independence of Theresa’s manner, or utter any further remonstrance, that maiden was already many steps beyond the hall-door, on her way to the Worralls’.

Another guest had arrived there before her; a strange gentleman from the west of England, a friend of Colonel Worrall, her host’s nephew. Theresa was always welcome to the gay young

people of the house, if only because, as they said, "they loved to laugh the starch out of her." "Here she is," cried Lucy Worrall, running up to her eagerly, and kissing her. "Here she is at last!—Mr. Talbois, this is our cousin, Miss Grafton."

The gentleman, a plain but distinguished looking man of some twenty-three years old or thereabouts, raised his head languidly from his book, to acknowledge the introduction;—raised it—but did not bend it down again, after he had once looked upon the new comer. Theresa was tall, but so perfectly formed and her figure of such an exquisite roundness, that she could in no wise be charged with awkwardness; her complexion was pure and dazzling; her hair as rich and profuse as that of Titian's mistress, though unlike its far-famed tresses, as black and bright as jet. She was dressed in a gown of very pale drab silk, its very plainness making the perfect symmetry of her form more apparent; one rosebud was placed in her belt, and over her shoulders she wore a large transparent muslin handkerchief crossed in front, and pinned so high as to disclose nothing below her throat. Her

hair, not permitted the ornament of curl or plait, was simply braided and twisted up behind; but it grew so thick and long, that there was no preventing its forming a natural coronet. There was a bright piquant smile upon her brilliant lips, (detractors denounced her mouth as being too wide,) a novelty in her expressions, and a simplicity in her manners, which went direct to the heart, gained entrance there, and kept possession.

“Come here, Theresa,” cried Lucy Worrall gaily, “come here! look what Mr. Talbois has brought for us!” and she drew her guest close to the table which was spread with splendid wreaths of feather flowers, at that time a rarity in England. “Are they not magnificent? The scarlet one is for me, and the gold-colour and green is for Susan; are they not wonderfully natural?”

“And how deliciously perfumed!” said Theresa, taking up a garland of delicate pink blossoms.

“I declare, Theresa, you have the gayest taste of us all!” exclaimed Lucy; and before she could utter a “don’t,” her nimble friend

had twined the long spray round her head, and was forcing her towards a large looking-glass.—Mr. Talbois appeared much amused by the scene—and Susan Worrall stooping, said in a low voice: “She is a Baptist—and O, so strictly brought up!—You know they are not allowed to wear any ornaments.”

But her communication was lost upon the gentleman whose eye was fixed upon the maiden at the mirror. In the first moment of delight, she exclaimed eagerly “O how beautiful!”—in the second, she became, for the first time in her life, aware that the words might be applied to the wearer, as well as the wreath. As this sudden consciousness burst upon her mind, an intense blush rose to her very temples, and hastening from before the glass, she cried out eagerly: “O take them off! O pray take them off!”

“Not I indeed! nay, you shall wear them all the evening, should she not, Mr. Talbois?” and then she held up her fore-finger menacingly, in an attitude which said: “you must not tell.”

“Indeed,” replied the gentleman very gallantly, with a polished composure of manner

entirely new to the unpracticed Theresa, "Sister Anne, of the Flower Convent whence these came, must have been favoured with some particular dream or revelation of Miss Grafton, when she was making this coronal: it seems to grow upon your head so naturally ;—I hope you believe in dreams?"

"O yes! I would not disbelieve in them for the world!"

"You are strangely behind the fashion," said her new acquaintance, in a tone of gentle irony: "and, I am afraid, dangerous company."

"Dangerous, Sir?" replied Theresa simply.

"Ay—dangerous in these days when it is considered a merit to get rid of all old-fashioned notions and prepossessions—when a person who produces a ghost story in society is ridiculed—when Spenser is so entirely laid on the shelf—and Shakespeare only tolerated for the sake of Mrs. Siddons."

"O, Mrs. Siddons!" cried Susan Worrall starting up eagerly, and clasping her hands: "take care what you are about, Mr. Talbois!"

"Where is Mrs. Worrall?" asked Theresa, just sufficiently well versed in the world's

wisdom to remember that it was not correct to be *too much* pleased with any one at a first interview.

“ Papa and mamma are out of town for a day or two,” replied Lucy archly: “ and here comes Robert!—Well—”

“ Come away, young ladies!” cried her brother gaily, “ the coach is at the door. Come, Theresa, for a drive! I declare, Talbois, my sisters have not been slow in doing honour to your present.”

Robert was silenced by a significant look from Lucy; but Theresa, remembering herself stopped suddenly—“ O stay one moment, pray stay! let me take these off before I go down into the street !”

But the others were already half way down stairs. Mr. Talbois who had eagerly stepped forward and offered his arm, did not appear to hear her exclamation; and was saying something so elegant and amusing about the convenience of wide old-fashioned stair-cases, and in particular about the magnificence of a certain flight of steps in the Vatican, down which he had seen the Pope and Cardinals descend in

grand procession, that Theresa forgot her discomposure, and in another instant was shut up in the coach with the gentleman at her side.

It was a lovely spring evening—and as the Worralls were often accustomed to take a drive after their very early tea, (remember, fastidious reader, that my tale goes back thirty years,) it never occurred to Theresa to enquire which way they were going: nor was she disengaged enough to look out, so much delighted was she with her companion's lively and entertaining conversation, until the carriage stopped suddenly.

“Why—what is this?—what is the matter?”—enquired she eagerly—“such a crowd of carriages!—and they are opening the door!—Lucy—Susan”—they were already out, and Mr. Talbois' hand extended to assist her to alight.

Theresa was too completely taken by surprise to have time to divine the cause of this stoppage. In another instant, her conductor had led her into the midst of a crowd of people, all looking their best, in gay evening dresses. The liveliness of the scene enchanted her,

though she was utterly bewildered by its novelty, and grasping Mr. Talbois' arm suddenly, she exclaimed: "O, Sir—tell me—where are we?"

"Did you never see Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth?"

Theresa absolutely grew sick with astonishment and that choking feeling which always attends any high degree of new excitement! On the stairs—within a few moments of seeing a play—a play of Shakespeare's—acted by Mrs. Siddons—it was almost too great a joy to bear and keep her reason! and helpless with the extreme of delight and anticipation, she suffered herself to be conducted to her place in the front of one of the boxes near the stage. The house was rapidly filling. Long files of ladies sumptuously dressed, with glittering ornaments and waving feathers, fell into their appointed seats with an ease and absence of astonishment surprising to our heroine, who was too much wrapt up in the novelty of the scene before her, even to attend to her esquire, while he, seated between herself and Lucy Worrall, to whom this frolic was by no means the first of

its kind, was pouring out an infinity of gay and sarcastic remarks upon the house and company, which at another time would have afforded the utmost amusement to his absorbed neighbour.

The orchestra began to play an overture. Bad as was our provincial music then—bad as it is now—the first sound of full instrumental harmony produces an effect upon those “who have music in their souls,” at once delightful and troubling: an effect which is never to be forgotten. It is like one of those vague and delicious pleasures of childhood which are enjoyed all the more, because reason and criticism enter not into the enjoyment. My own first experience of orchestral music was Mozart’s Jupiter symphony; and I can compare the feelings of pleasure it awakened in myself, to none other than those produced by the first sight of the open-sea;—and as I think of them, grow melancholy from the thought the same intense sensation of wonder and delight can never be enjoyed again!

But when the curtain rose and the tragedy began, what a new world at once burst open

before Theresa! Although she had been a diligent reader of Shakespeare, and knew this particular play almost by heart,—she hung upon the progress of the scenes with a breathless rapture, which made her totally forget the place in which she was, the crowd of which she formed a part. And when the thrilling interest of the story had reached its highest point, and the stern ghastly Queen, (she had assuredly at that moment ceased to be the actress,) walked forth in her sleep, with glazed eye, stealthy step, and hands that would wash themselves clean of “the damning spot,”—Theresa was so violently agitated, that the attention of her companions, entranced as they were by the talent of that magnificent artist, was involuntarily withdrawn from the stage to the spectator. Talbois, in particular, gazed upon her with eager and intent admiration, as he perused the lineaments of her speaking face, the fixed and glistening eyes, the flushed cheek, the parted lips, the small white hands clenched in each other and dropped upon the front of the box. At that moment the fates of the future lives of those two individuals were decided.

It was over—and a heavy flood of tears relieved Theresa of a part of the emotion which had began to grow almost suffocating. Many an eye, inured to the fascinations of tragedy, was turned on that box, to examine the features of its beautiful inmate, who remained too closely folded in her dream to be troubled with any retrospections or presentiments. Her companions, however, now began to think of Mr. Lambwood's stern reproofs, and Reuben's interminable rhapsodies, and urged Robert to find their carriage. "For Theresa's sake, you know," said Lucy in an audible whisper; this partially recalled her to herself, and the circumstance of some gentleman mistaking her for an acquaintance and bowing to her, disenchanted her yet more completely.

"To me, Susan? it is impossible! There can be no one here who knows me—and what will they say at home? O why did you bring me here?"

"You appreciate Mrs. Siddons, I see," observed her neighbour, in the softest tone of his rich voice.

"I have been delighted—O how much de-

lighted!" replied she with a sigh, in which the future mingled with the past. But the fears of anticipation every moment increased as she approached the Worralls'! She dreaded the thoughts of meeting the severe eye of her enthusiastic brother, whose religious feeling was characteristic by a strictness almost ascetic. She repeated again and again to herself: "How can I be blamed? I did not know where I was going: and, after all, what a new and delightful field of enjoyment has been opened to me!" It was in vain:—by the time that she alighted from the coach she would have given anything, *save* the recollection of the last three hours, for an alleviation to her uneasiness. To her unspeakable relief, however, she found that Reuben had never been at Mr. Worrall's to conduct her home: it was long past his usual time, and the wondering what could have prevented him was a new source of disquiet. She took a hurried leave of her friends; resigned the tell-tale garland, the very existence of which she had forgotten, till reminded of it by Lucy, and escorted by Mr. Talbois, set forth homewards.

“ I hurry you,” said he, slackening his pace after they had walked a few steps together.

“ O no, thank you, the faster the better:— I am very impatient to reach home.”

Her companion had the delicacy not to enquire the wherefore of this speed. He could hardly suppose it to arise from any objection to his company; for, as they parted on the steps of Mr. Lambwood’s front door, it is rumoured that she was artless enough to say: “ Good night, Mr. Talbois, and thank you, I hope that we shall soon meet again.”

She rang gently once—twice—but no one answered the bell:—a dreadful misgiving crossed her mind. Could they mean to lock her out for the night?—she had heard Mrs. Lambwood mention such things being sometimes done in rigid households; and, almost in a spasm of terror at the bare thought, rung again and louder. This third time, however, she was successful, for Reuben, opening the door softly, beckoned her to come in. Mrs. Lambwood was upon the stairs with a candle in her hand. “ My love how could we forget thee?” said she, surprised at Theresa’s face of

concern ; “ but this awful judgment of Providence has overtaken us so suddenly. Thou didst not hear it?—thy father,—my husband”—and tears streamed down her cheeks as she spoke—“ was stricken by the palsy scarcely two hours ago—and Dr. Magrath, who is above stairs, declares it to be almost the severest case he has ever seen;—the Lord’s will be done!”

What a revulsion of feeling did these few words cause in Theresa’s mind!—what a sudden change from readiness to abide and answer reproof, to that natural, yet most unreasonable self-reproach which says: “ Why was I away when this happened?” She followed her mother into the sick chamber, and was much shocked by the terrible appearance of the invalid. His face, always livid, and now peculiarly colourless, was drawn on the left side as though it had followed the attraction of a magnet. One hand, totally useless, lay upon the quilt: and the only sign of life which he gave, was that inarticulate moaning so characteristic of pain and feebleness. In answer to her eager enquiries, Dr. Magrath told Theresa that

the turn which his disorder took would entirely depend upon the effect of the blisters and other violent remedies applied: and that it was imperatively necessary that he should be carefully watched all night, as the case was one in which a neglected symptom might prove fatal. Mrs. Lambwood chose to sit up, and Theresa, in spite of her remonstrances, insisted upon sharing her vigil.

Reuben retired to rest, and the two addressed themselves to their melancholy task. The night wore slowly on, and the invalid lay in a state of half stupor. Mrs. Lambwood and Theresa sat crouching over the feeble night-lamp, the former reading to herself in a low voice, comforting passages from her pocket bible:—the latter, in spite of herself, forgetting the gloom and stillness of the sick chamber, with the long dark watery shadows cast upon the roof by the weak light, and the tick of the time piece—in the thoughts of the brilliancy and animation of the scene which she had so recently left. Every moment she expected her companion to question her: but Mrs. Lambwood made no enquiry—she was too much

absorbed in her own anxieties to remember so much as that Theresa had been abroad on that evening.

It was between one and two o'clock in the morning that the sound of a footstep close behind them, made both of the watchers start and look up. The intruder was Reuben,—robed in a long dressing-gown and carrying in his hand a bible. His wild and thoughtful features, now shaded by his long hair, which, in the day, he wore combed back from his forehead, wore now an appearance almost supernatural when beheld by that dim light: animated as they were by an expression of amazement mingled with awe. “What is this, Reuben,” whispered Mrs. Lambwood, “that thou art up again so soon?”

“I have dreamed a dream,” replied he, in a low solemn voice. “My father will never recover: I have seen him in his shroud, standing by my bed-side.”

“O hush!” cried Theresa, “do not tell us now!”

“Be silent, daughter,” said Mrs. Lambwood composedly, “if it have been given to Reuben

to tell me anything, it is also my duty to hear it. I trust that I shall be enabled to submit myself to any burden which the Lord may be pleased to lay upon me. Go on, Reuben."

"At the other side of my bed stood another figure, also wrapt in a shroud; the very image of my own mother's picture;—the two looked quietly upon me, and spoke together."

"And what did they say?" enquired Mrs. Lambwood eagerly, and with the most perfect faith in the authority of Reuben's tale.

"Mother! dear mother!" interrupted Theresa, "remember that this is but an idle dream."

At this instant a moaning sound was heard from the bed, as if the patient wished to turn himself. The two females hastened to his assistance. He was now evidently in very great pain, and as the doctor had desired to be summoned, in case of any change, Reuben was despatched to bring him. He remained with them until morning, and, by that time, the remembrance of the vision of the night had passed away.

A week went slowly over, and still Mr.

Lambwood hovered between life and death ;— of the two, nearer to the latter. His reason was grievously affected, his speech utterly taken away, and every measure resorted to attended with only a transient success. At length Dr. Magrath pronounced it as his opinion that the sufferer's life might be protracted for many months, perhaps even a year ; —but that any thing like restoration to his former state of health was a thing not to be hoped for. Every succeeding day confirmed the correctness of his opinion, and the steady-hearted wife prepared her mind for a long attendance on the invalid, and its termination by his being released from his pains by death. It therefore happened that much of the former order of John Lambwood's household was broken up. Reuben was diligently pursuing his devotional studies, with a view to the ministry. His character was a most singular one, and its singularities began, at this period, to be exaggerated by the most extreme variability of health, and the constant recurrence of acute head-aches, which were succeeded by fits of the deepest mental depression. He

possessed a morbidly tender conscience, which magnified the most unimportant trifles into matters of grave self-reproach; and had far outrun his instructor's requisitions in denouncing every thing which bordered upon relaxation, or would induce cheerfulness of spirit. His mind was almost always in a state of unnatural excitement,—diving restlessly into the abstruse and mysterious parts of the scriptures, and drawing thence wild and new conclusions which often displeased as much as astonished his foster-father. The only link which seemed to bind him to this earth was his sister, and their mutual affection was beautiful, from the total dissimilarity of their characters: his was full of scruple and self-condemnation for loving any perishing thing of earth so well;—hers, tempered by a fear, such as makes the people of the East follow softly the steps of those whom they believe to be inspired. They spent little time together,—they conversed little with each other;—but, as Mrs. Lambwood had said to her husband, they loved each other, and it was enough.

The household derangement caused by John Lambwood's long illness was anything but favourable to Theresa's solidity of mind. Her character had reached that point when a few influences decide its future cast. She was now to be found at the Worralls' more frequently than ever,—not that she neglected her home duties ; on the contrary, the management of the house devolved upon her, and, besides this, she managed to pass a large portion of every day in the sick chamber,—cheering the anxiety of her foster-mother with every imaginable device suggested by a hopeful temperament and a lively fancy. All this time, however, her mind was, with rapid strides, separating itself farther and farther from the creeds and habits of thought in which she had been educated. One cause of this sudden change might be the frequent society of Mr. Talbois, who chose to remain in —— all that summer, and seemed to take particular pleasure in developing her powers, and watching the eager delight with which she possessed herself of any new discovery. They walked together,—they read together, but not always

with agreement. She was in love with romance; nothing was too stirring for her taste, made all the keener by its not having been fed in childhood with fairy legends, and goblin tales; nothing was too improbable for her belief. He, whose enthusiasm, to begin was far less in measure than hers, had been long ago sneered into a certain smoothness and moderation by the world in which he had passed his life, would have pruned this exuberance, and regulated these high flights if he could;—but he tried in vain;—those who cut the cord cannot always call back the bird. She devoured the “Arabian Nights;” she revelled in the chambers of Spenser’s mellow and antique imagery; but, above all, worshipped with a blind idolatry those rare and tremendous writers, the old dramatists;—and as she walked to and fro in the noiseless house, her mind was busily brooding over the magnificent, but somewhat over-wrought scenes of Massinger and Webster, and Beaumont and Fletcher and Marlow; and she began to long, and to fancy, and project,—and was only drawn down again to common life by the remembrance of

something which Mr. Talbois had said. All this time the Worralls looked on in silence,—at first the silence of curiosity and amusement, but ere long the quiet observation of sarcasm.

Another passion was gradually awakened by this sedulous nourishing of a too vehement imagination,—the passion which, of all others, is the one most fatal to a woman's happiness,—a longing after fame. What had been in her mother high-toned enthusiasm, was inherited by Theresa under the form of a yearning after distinction, an impatience of a common-place lot ; a love of power, veiled by a delusive idea of the good and great things she would achieve were it once in her possession. In those days female authorship was not as common it is now ; and the bright few who had undertaken its labours, were almost as much admired for their singularity as for their talents. The cry of ' Blue-stockings ' had been raised, and men looked upon a woman's work with that lordly superiority which could afford to bestow *a little* praise. And this was not the species of fame which Theresa felt would satisfy

the cravings of her mind. A desire to appear upon the stage, to embody some of the characters which she loved so enthusiastically, was a castle which there was no harm, and great amusement in building; but, like the fox into the churn, this intruding fancy presently made good its entrance, and established its residence. It soon became natural to Theresa to fancy herself the Lady Macbeth,—the Virgin Martyr,—the Duchess of Amalfi;—she became familiar with their words, and, from those, with their thoughts; she felt how they must have looked, how acted; and it was her favourite pleasure to pace to and fro in her chamber, working herself up into a fever by reciting the most passionate of their declamations, till the indulgence of her ill-regulated fancy became mistaken for the promptings of destiny.

It was towards the end of June, when tree and meadow are clothed with that deep and profuse green, which becomes monotonous to the eye, and gives the evening walk a sombreness, almost a melancholy, equally remote from the hopeful freshness of spring, or the gor-

geous variety of autumn,—that Theresa was prevailed upon by Mr. Talbois to accompany him in an evening drive, in spite of the teazings of the Worralls, “who were beginning,” as she said to herself, “to take a very unpleasant and familiar notice of her concerns.” The fresh air was delightful to one who had all that day been inhaling the loaded atmosphere of the sick room ;—and she rode on, by the side of her courtly companion, undisturbed by any wonder as to what he could mean by so earnestly pressing her to allow him the pleasure of her company. He, for his part, was in a reserved, if not a moody humour,—said much less than usual, and that little was of the gravest,—and seemed purposely to select those close and shady lanes which, towards sunset, might suit the contemplative and the serious. The hay-harvest was in its prime, filling the air with balmy sweetness ; the wild roses had climbed to the tops of the hedges ; the lime trees hung heavy with bloom. There could not be a more delicious evening ;—and yet Mr. Talbois was infinitely more silent than usual. What could it mean ? Theresa almost

thought she should venture to rally him on this unusual taciturnity, if he drove on, saying a word at every milestone, and no more, and scarcely answering what she said.

But, just as the words were on her lips, a little incident diverted the current of her thoughts. There is, about four miles from our town, a place, where four grassy lanes, gently sloping down amongst plantations, meet; and their intersection is marked by two or three of those curious old stones, commonly referred to in the days of the Druids, upon which antiquarian eyes have seen rings, and serpents, and other symbolical figures. As they approached these, Theresa perceived that a small group of persons was gathered round them,—one standing a little higher than the rest,—and, immediately after, the loud tones of a man's voice reached them.

“What is this?” said Mr. Talbois, driving more slowly, so as to take a deliberate view of the little company. As they drew nearer, Theresa perceived that the speaker was her brother.

The young man was standing upon a frag-

ment of stone which had fallen from one of the larger masses. He had tied a coloured handkerchief round his forehead, otherwise his head was bare; and his face, turned towards the west, was just touched by one of the last sunbeams that streamed in through an opening in the boughs. This partial light, falling upon his features, suited well their elevated expression, and gave almost a beauty to sallow cheek and sunken eye. Round him were gathered a few hay-makers, middle-aged men, leaning attentively on their rakes, and brown comely women in their cool summer dress; one with a baby at her breast, another, holding by the hand a little child: and he was addressing them in a strain of plain eloquence fresh from the heart, turning the season and their employment to a religious use, and exhorting them to use the same diligence in the spiritual as well as in the temporal harvest-field. Tears stood in Theresa's eyes while she listened,—for her companion, struck by the picturesque appearance of the group, stopped his horse; and when, after a short pause, they proceeded unnoticed, as it seemed, by the

preacher, she turned her head often to look back, until the branches shut out the tall figure with his outstretched arm, from her view.

“That young methodist was very like your brother, was he not?” said Mr. Talbois, breaking a silence of some moments’ duration.

“That young man *was* my brother!” replied Theresa, thinking aloud; “poor Reuben! I wish I were as good as he is!”

There was another pause, even longer than before.

“Really,” at last said Mr. Talbois, attempting a gayer tone, “this is too dismal, and might be the prelude of a leave-taking for ever, instead of only for a few weeks, or, at the utmost a month or two.”

“Leave-taking!—a month or two!” cried Theresa, surprised out of herself; “are you going away, Mr. Talbois?—And when—when must it be? but I have no right to enquire.”

“I leave for Dorsetshire at six o’clock to-morrow morning.—You have *every* right to enquire.”—He again paused abruptly.

Theresa blushed deeply; though she would have given a king’s ransom for the command

of her colour ;—his last words were so strange, and then this sudden checking of himself, as though he felt that he had said too much.

“ May I ask,” resumed her companion, in a more constrained voice, “ whether you are likely to remain here,—I mean as a resident ? ”

“ I think so,” replied Theresa, and then, struggling to resume her old frank manner, added :—“ But we shall meet again, shall we not ? ” I am indebted to you for entrance into a new world,—and it will amuse you to see how many steps farther I have advanced, by the time that you come again.—You *will* come again to see the Worralls ? ”—concluding her sentence hastily, lest the tone of her voice should betray the more than concern which she felt.

“ I *shall* come again,” replied Talbois with an effort ; “ but not to see the Worralls. If I ask to see another friend whom I have learned to know, and to admire, in ———, shall I be denied admittance ? ”

Theresa could only muster sufficient composure to falter out :—“ Surely, no.”

“ Well then, I will try to live on that promise.—Here we are at home already ! Confound Bayard ! he is slow enough usually. Farewell then, dear Miss Grafton !—dear Theresa !—farewell—but to return !”

Theresa shook hands with him in silence. One of her gloves was half off ;—he withdrew it entirely, and, as he drove away, she derived some melancholy consolation from remembering the reverence with which she had seen him consign it to his pocket-book.

PART II.

THE EXPERIENCES OF A
DEBUTANTE.

“ There are the players.”

Hamlet.

MR. CLACKWORTH, at that time the popular manager of a theatre in a large and gay town in the west of England, was breakfasting at his ease in a chamber, the littered state whereof would have made tidy housewives ready to faint, while the objects it contained were sufficient to have amused the most insatiable of Fatimas during the week of her husband's absence, so that she should have forgotten to

put her hand in her pocket only to *feel* for the key of the blue chamber. It was a small room, sixteen feet square, and its walls were crowded to overflowing with curiosities and ornaments, choice cabinet pictures and curious costumes, mirrors, girandoles ;—here, a row of black and gold shelves, creaking under the weight of *princeps* editions of rare old plays—there, some Turkish scimitar, or murderous looking brace of pistols, which had done their duty in Bajazet or Bobadil—here, a bust of Mrs. Cibber—there, a French doll, dressed in the newest mode, to resemble Madame Rombot, the celebrated *danseuse*. The carpet was a genuine Turkey rug—the table, with its equipage of exquisite Sevre china, had been purchased at some sale of the cast-off goods of a Mancini, or a Pompadour ; and before the fire slept a Persian greyhound of remarkable beauty, which had been presented to the eccentric manager by a physician, who had received it, in part of a fee for attending six sick ladies belonging to the establishment of Elfi Bey.

The owner of these treasures was, after all,

the greatest curiosity in the chamber. A good liver—you might see by his face ; a man of breeding, you might guess from the splendid volume of Brantome which lay open upon the table, just beyond the neighbourhood of his buttered muffin ; a gentleman, in right of that indescribable air not to be misunderstood, which even a somewhat theatrical parade of jewellery on his fingers, and that peculiar style of hair, as completely and characteristically Thespian as the venerable green curtain itself could not destroy ; a kind man, as might be divined from the attention paid to him by a quaint, tidy-looking old lady, who came in and out with great zeal ; his appearance was so singular (though not unpleasing) that any one, who possessed a taste for the extraordinary, would have turned from all the inanimate wonders of the place, to study the strange figure of the humourist, its owner. He was short in stature, and as perfectly round and guiltless of a waist, as if he had been pressed through a cylinder too small for his bulk ; his eyes were small, keen, and set so far apart, that his mouth, by observing the painter's rule,

which regulates its length by their distance from corner to corner, was unaccountably long, and so pinched in towards the middle, that its under lip was almost entirely invisible. His linen was of the finest texture, and scrupulously white ; his slippers of the costliest morocco, and his damask dressing-gown brocaded with a perfect pantomime of dragons and rose-bushes.

“ A young lady in the anti-room, Martha ?—can’t see her,—can’t possibly see her ;—never will see people at meal times ;—tell her to call again, and—stay a moment, Martha—what is she like ? ”

“ I can’t positively say, Sir, except that she is in deep mourning.”

“ O, Mrs. Meriden, the widow, I suppose,—tired of her weeds, and wishing to be re-engaged.”

“ No, Sir ; it is a much younger lady than Mrs. Meriden ; when would you wish her to call again ?—This is quite a stranger.”

“ Stay a moment, Martha ;—did she say what she wanted ?—Perhaps it is that jade Mademoiselle Chèvre’s maid come, with a long

face, to tell me that her mistress has a nervous fever, and can't dance to-night,—and this her last night, too, before she goes to Plymouth ! Plague take these Frenchwomen ! why can't English people be content without them ?”

“ No, sir,—Mademoiselle Chèvre's maid speaks no English ; and, besides, I should know that outlandish head of hair of her's under any bonnet.”

“ Shew her in, then, Martha ;—I can't think—alas ! for the days that are gone ! I once could eat my breakfast in peace ! You are *sure* she is young, Martha ? Shew her in ; and, if I ring again, bring up some fresh chocolate,” and the gentleman turned down the cuffs of his dressing-gown, settled his wig, and prepared to look gay and gallant.

“ What name shall I say, Ma'am ?” said Martha, sending her voice before her, after the fashion of Homer's heroes.

“ It does not matter,” replied the most musical voice which Mr. Clackworth had ever heard ; he again arranged the ends of his cravat, so to do full justice to its frills of real Valenciennes.

“ Well, Ma’am, it is very strange. The lady, Sir,” cried Martha, displeased at the visitor’s reserve.

“ Very well, you may go, Martha. Pray, Madam, take a chair ;—that will do, Martha, you need not wait.”

“ Well, to be sure,” muttered the discomfited housekeeper, leaving the room as slowly as she dared, “ to think of any one’s coming at this time in the morning !”

“ And now, Madam, that we are alone,” said Mr. Clackworth, edging his chair near to the one occupied by his visitor, “ may I beg to know the name of my guest, and what has procured me so early an honour ?”

The veiled lady seemed to find some difficulty in speaking.

“ Very diffident indeed,” observed Mr. Clackworth, *aside* ; “ pray, Madam, do me the favour, if you have not breakfasted, to allow me to ring for some fresh chocolate.”

“ Thank you, Sir,” replied the incognita, “ I have breakfasted.”

“ I am truly sorry to hear it ; it will condemn me to the dullness of finishing my repast

alone ;—you will excuse my proceeding. Here Romeo ! Romeo !—here, poor fellow ! I had almost forgotten you,” and he stooped and fed his greyhound with the remains of the beefsteak.

“ I ought to beg your pardon,” said the lady, breaking, at last, the somewhat awkward pause which ensued, “ for thus intruding upon you at such an early hour.”

“ Never too early to allow me the happiness of making your acquaintance,” replied the courtly manager, whose politeness had not received a check by the result of a stealthy examination of the features which lurked under the poke of the large crape bonnet.

“ But I was told,” continued his guest, “ that I should at this time be almost sure of finding you disengaged, and was anxious to wait upon you to know—if—in short, you would allow me to—having long had a decided inclination—”

“ My dear young lady,” replied Mr. Clackworth, in his most encouraging tone, “ I hope you are not afraid of me ; but you are nearly as mysterious as the Sphynx herself. To the point, however, let us waste no time in useless delicacies. Am I correct in guessing that the

purport of your visit refers to a first appearance, which you wish to make upon the stage, under my direction?"—another motion of the chair brought him close to her elbow.

"You are, Sir :—family difficulties—"

"Well, my dear young lady, there is no occasion to enter upon the chapter of reasons ; we ought rather to speak of qualifications ;—nay, really, you should taste my chocolate if only to give you courage. Miss Farren made it immortal, when she did me the honour to breakfast with me, by calling it the *elixir vitæ*. What have been your studies ?—but, pray understand me, I am by no means sure that I am in circumstances to offer you an engagement except in case of the most decided success."

The lady hastened to assure him that such was by no means her expectation. She was, indeed, anxious to be permitted to appear under his auspices, from the high character which his management bore ; as to any engagement, that was, of course, a thing for future consideration.

"Very reasonably said, my dear young lady, I must confess.—Down, Romeo, down

sir ! you are *too* greedy !—Yes, Madam, I am aware the name of my theatre does stand high ; and your wish is a very natural one. I could mention a score of distinguished names, at least, of those who could date their celebrity from the time when they first trod my boards. But then I have so much upon my hands just now. I have engaged Mademoiselle Chèvre, the famous dancer, for three months, in conjunction with the Plymouth and Exeter people ; and, while she is here, no one will listen to, or look at any thing else ; and besides,—but, however, Madam, will you do me the favour to read a passage or two ;—you have *never* appeared before, you say,—not even in private ? ”

“ Never.”

“ Well then, supposing we say some of the speeches in Portia’s part, or Juliet’s—which-ever you like. Here, Madam, is my pocket Shakspeare, my breviary, as I call it ; will you do me the favour ? ”

“ Thank you, Sir,” replied the novice, trembling as she declined the book, “ I think I know them all by heart.”

“ Good ! good ! a well-stored memory is

not a bad foundation for Thespian honours. May I beg of you to remove your bonnet,—you must excuse me, but I must be permitted to form some idea ;—allow me ; though I fear I shall prove but a poor lady's maid."

Theresa gave back as he rose ; and, untying the strings, divested herself of her bonnet with such an unsteady hand, that her comb too was loosened in the operation, and a flood of long silken tresses fell upon her shoulders, and mantled her brow, which was now covered with the deepest crimson.

"Ahem ! ahem ! very satisfactory," said the old gentleman, apparently not discontented with the revelation ; "and now may I ask your name."

"Aubrey, Sir," replied our old friend in a faltering voice. Alas for truth ! "Aubrey ! a very euphonious name indeed ! I will not enquire whether it is genuine. Nay, don't let me distress you ; it is so very common a step on the part of the timid and inexperienced. I remember hearing Mrs. Abington say, but that's no matter ;—now, my dear Miss Aubrey, something of Juliet,—suppose me to be your Romeo, or, (*do* let me persuade you out of this extreme

sensitiveness) talk to my dog and forget that I am by:—the balcony scene, for instance.”

Poor Theresa, who had long ago, imagined that she had screwed her courage up to the sticking place, felt now that it was called upon, how woefully deficient she was in nerve; and her voice faltered so much, that she was unable to do justice to her own very good and original conception of the character of the love-sick Italian girl: nevertheless, this very tremour imparted a tenderness to her manner, which, to use the professional phrase, seemed to *take* mightily. Mr. Clackworth sate leaning back in his easy chair, with the points of his thumbs joined, occasionally putting in so much of the dialogue as was necessary to the connexion of the scene, and murmuring to himself, such morsels of encouragement as, “Pretty!—ah! very pretty!—ah! good! don’t be afraid of giving way to your feelings:—a very sweetly toned voice, upon my word! we shall easily add a little more power. Thank you, madam, I will tax your excellent memory no further.”

“ I should feel more at home in Constance or Lady Macbeth,” ventured his visitor.

“ Pooh, pooh! my dear,—excuse me, but I

am an old man: never dream of Constance or Lady Macbeth for these fifteen years to come or, at all events, till you can write *Mrs.* before your name. And now I really hardly can tell what to say to you. I am pleased with you there is no denying it; and nature has been very bountiful to you: don't blush, we take all these things into consideration—but, . . .”

He was interrupted by the entrance of Martha—“Miss Randalls, Sir, wishes to see you immediately, Sir.”

“Bless me! what can have brought her here so early? she always makes every one wait half an hour at least at rehearsal.”

“I hear him. He *is* in,” said a sonorous voice in the anti-chamber—“I will enter. Speak, Sir, is this true?”

“Good morning, Miss Randalls,” said Clackworth rather distantly.

The lady was a full blown woman of thirty-five, upon whom the wear and tear of stage life, and some whispered, of self indulgence, had told their tale. She was dressed in the extravagance of fashion, and advanced with a proud and somewhat resentful air.

“I will not accept of your greeting,” replied

she, in the same heroic tone, “until I know whether it is to be peace or war, whether we are friends or foes.”

“Pray explain yourself, Miss Randalls.”

“In a word then, who is this young person?” and as she spoke she extended her arm in the most imposing attitude towards Theresa, who felt a little disposed to smile, a very little to cry.

“This young lady, Miss Aubrey,—upon my word, Miss Randalls, your enquiry is very extraordinary.”

“Am I to interpret this hesitation as confirmation strong?” replied the tragedy queen. “Am I to conclude that, at last, you are turning traitor to my cause, and with my cause, to your own best interests?—am I, in short, to be supplanted by this raw girl? look to it, Mr. Clackworth, and answer me faithfully.”

“Now, pray, what is the meaning of all this intemperance?”

“Intemperance, sir! will you dare to echo *that* calumny?—Clackworth, I will neither be insulted nor trifled with:—you best know for how many years I have been a faithful and

zealous coadjutor of your establishment.—If this young person is to be introduced to my detriment;—be sincere, be honest in your villainy,—if, I say, this Miss Aubrey is to be engaged, we are two people henceforward and for ever!”

“Upon my word, this flight is rather too high,” replied the manager, his civility waxing smaller at every word he spoke: “I cannot for an instant, allow your right to make this enquiry; and must beg, that if you will visit me at such untimely hours, you will do me the favour of coming with the intention of being a *little* more agreeable.”

“Is it so?” replied the Randalls, her eyes flashing a fire which she had never been able to kindle for a Roxalana or Statira:—“Is it so?—am I to be despised,—laid upon the shelf, and, gracious Heavens ! for this girl?—Clackworth, you shall repent this!—and for *you*, madam,”—she swept across the room towards the place where Theresa sat, absolutely trembling at the sight and sound of so much violence.

“And for *you*, madam,” interrupted Mr Clackworth in his most decided tone, “I must

beg your attention for one moment, Miss Randalls. Be pleased to consider our engagement together as at an end—now and for ever. You remember that on my part, it is entirely optional how long I retain you, and that you have annoyed me rather too often by these scenes in private; which, allow me to observe, Miss Aubrey, are in terrible bad taste. It is your own doing, madam, that we are separated. Good morning—and before you enter into treaty with another manager, permit me to recommend to you the study of keeping your temper; particularly when you go out to pay morning visits.”

The rage which was provoked by this cool reproof passes description. Mr. Clackworth was known to be immoveable in his decisions, and by this steadiness had been enabled to maintain a long and successful reign over his motley subjects; and Miss Randalls was sober enough to remember too well, how often she had sinned and been forgiven, to entertain a thought of making her peace on this occasion. She had, therefore, no motive for restraining her spite, and grew so violent, that at last, the

manager took her gently by the elbows, and conducting her to the door of the anti-chamber, desired Martha to shew her out.

“Shew me out, you paltry fellow!” were her last words—“but remember that you have provoked me—and tremble!”

“A very violent person,” observed he coolly as he returned to Theresa, wiping his forehead after the exertion which the expulsion of the irate Randalls had required: “A most extremely violent person! but I cannot submit to any dictation, madam. I have done with her; and therefore, my dear young lady, if you can manage your first appearance tolerably soon, and should succeed, I shall be glad to enlist you as her substitute.”

Theresa expressed her great satisfaction at this unlooked for good fortune, and they then began to enter into particulars which it would be tedious to record. After a long interview they parted, Mr. Clackworth having first advised Theresa to place herself under respectable protection as soon as possible, and mentioning a respectable family connected with the theatre, whose conduct was unexceptionable, and

who could be of use to her in her profession, no less as an assistance than as a safeguard. She thanked him for this fatherly care of her, and took her leave with strangely mingled feelings of exultation and retrospect. We must briefly examine the latter.

Many and various had been the events crowded into the space of the last two years; strangely had the chains of circumstances seemed to fall from around her, and leave her, if not compel her to a freedom of agency, in which it is so difficult for a young and beautiful woman to act with discretion. In the first place, Mr. Lambwood had lived only a few weeks after Theresa had parted from Mr. Talbois on that memorable evening. His affectionate wife, who had, all her life, prayed for nothing so eagerly as that she might not survive her husband, and who was utterly worn out by her anxious attendance upon him, began, within a few weeks of his decease, to show symptoms of a consumptive tendency. So far from being alarmed by their danger, with the natural eagerness of her temperament, she rejoiced in the prospect of so soon rejoining her

departed companion. Some might have complained that this extreme anxiety to lay down the burden of earth partook of the nature of selfishness, inasmuch as she rarely seemed to advert to the future lot of the foster-children she was leaving behind her—but it is an ungracious thing to interfere with the workings of sorrow. “When she became assured,” says the eloquent minister, who drew up an account of her last moments for the edification of survivors—“and that she was fast approaching the valley of the shadow of death, an unspeakable delight and thankfulness possessed her spirit, which seemed to await its Maker’s summons with wings already spread—and to trouble itself for nothing save to make haste and possess the fair inheritance provided for it. During the last month of her life, her adopted daughter never quitted her side for an hour, and had, as she thought, kissed her to sleep a few moments before she expired. Never, indeed, was a death-bed less fearful! No sooner had the soul departed, than a smile, radiant beyond all description clothed her pale but still comely features; a smile, which told that the

hope of the deceased was well founded—and that she had entered into the joys of Paradise.”

Upon opening Mr. Lambwood's will, it had been discovered that he had left all his disposable property to Reuben Grafton. The greater part of his income had arisen from annuities upon his own and his wife's life ; so that the sum bequeathed was by no means a considerable one, and the charge given to the young man to provide for his sister could only be obeyed by his proving economical as well as discreet, and adopting some calling which might increase his income.

Mrs. Lambwood had bequeathed three hundred pounds to the desolate girl,—desolate, because there was little hope of her finding in her brother either a protector or a counsellor ; and her own mind was in that unsettled state when both of the two were urgently needed. Reuben had long since forsaken his first religious friends as lukewarm and too conformable to the world, and joined a sect of more fervent and less educated worshippers, to whom he became an oracle and a minister. It was lamentable to see so fine a mind rapid-

ly approaching utter ruin, if not, partial insanity; but the evil was past remedy. His old friends, in the strict quiet congregation which he had quitted, remonstrated with him, but in vain;—he was always surrounded by his new associates, for whom no doctrine was too wild, or no zeal too excessive, and whose labours were most chiefly exercised upon those of the most illiterate and degraded class, and with the most profit; from the same reason which renders the bodily constitutions of such accessible to remedies which would hurry those of more moderate habits to the grave.

All this Theresa saw with dismay,—she groaned under the infliction of the coarse society of Reuben's new connexions;—she doubted and disbelieved his counsels, and presently became obliged, in self-defence, to resist his requests, which were peremptorily urged without patience or discretion. The effect of the few months which she passed thus miserably under her brother's guardianship, was to alienate her in spirit more than ever from her old habits, and to give her floating

fancies form and substance. As for her parents, no one could give her tidings of their life or death ; and the only other friends from whom she had a right to expect help or countenance, proved themselves, as worldly people will always do on such occasions, selfishly unwilling to do their duty by one who had some claims on their sympathy.

Yes, it may be calculated upon as a certainty that those, who, from idleness or vanity, are the first to persuade another to change his opinions or habits, are also the first to denounce such a change, should it extend a hand's breadth beyond the liberty permitted by their own code. They will move the stone, and then wonder that it rolls ; they will tear away the cobwebs of old prejudices to let in the light, and then complain that their pupil sees too much. Thus it was between the Worralls and Theresa. They had opened her eyes to the fascinations of the world ; they had encouraged her in cultivating her intellect, and now they began to blame her as frivolous, because, though her heart was aching with anxiety, she had not lost all power or

taking pleasure in the very things which they had taught her to love ; and as free-thinking, because her mind had taken to itself the license of passing the bounds of the circle, wherein theirs were trammelled, as strictly as the Lambwoods had been within their narrower ring of sectarianism. There were other causes, too, for this heartless uncharitableness. Theresa was a beauty, and admired ; and they, who had brought that beauty into notice, were jealous of the admiration which it excited. In short, their friendship had visibly cooled ever since the time of Mr. Talbois' visit, and even before Mr. Lambwood's death, the girls had reached the point of talking *at* Theresa, by spreading all manner of reports, and dropping such hints as,—“ Mr. Talbois was so gay at Weymouth,—they had letters,—and it was said that he was going to be married to an Earl's ward ;—but they did not believe it ;—he was *such* a flirt—not in the least likely to marry,—they had known it when he first came to them, and therefore kept on their guard.” Alas for truth ! again ; for the three first nights of his visit, Lucy and

Susan had lain awake trying to find out which of the two he liked the best ! The intercourse between the Worralls and Theresa became more and more constrained week by week. The young ladies about this time formed *attachments*, and their prudent parents began to think that their intimacy with such a “strange young person” as Theresa, was likely to do them much injury in the sight of their beloveds, who were steady substantial men of business, and had no notion of poetry or any such silly doings ; and though they would go to the theatre occasionally to see a play, regarded the authors and actors by whom they condescended to be entertained, much with the same contempt as the Brāhmin regards the Pariah withal.

It was long ere Theresa became fully alive to the unkindness of her companions, of late so zealous to enlarge the sphere of her pleasures ; it was long before she could believe, that it would be a relief to them to let the acquaintance drop decently. Some who read this, may possibly, at some period or other of their lives, have made similar discoveries,—

and such only can understand the poignancy of her feelings, which the buoyancy of youthful spirits, and the hopefulness of her temperament could hardly overcome or soften. She was, however, diverted from dwelling on their falseness by new trials. At this juncture, Thomas Proudfoot renewed his addresses with a dogged perseverance, which assailed her in the morning with the same solicitations as she had refused to listen to on the previous evening. Reuben, too, would fain have introduced to her notice as lovers, some as enthusiastic, and more coarse than himself; and even began to threaten her with coercion should she refuse to entertain their odious proposals. He regarded her as one possessed with an evil spirit, which was only to be expelled by force, and would pray over her, and apply denunciatory texts of Scripture to her case, with a freedom which totally destroyed her reverence for truths in such a perverted state. At last, she could endure no more, and resolved to take flight from so comfortless and disturbed a home. Then came the questions; whither was she to go?

what plans must she adopt? The answer was always the same,—*the stage*,—and so strongly did circumstances second her natural inclination, that she thought herself only yielding to necessity in adopting a theatrical life as her profession. Her plans were promptly taken;—she gathered together her few possessions and as much of Mrs. Lambwood's legacy as yet remained to her, and, availing herself of her brother's absence from home on a tent-preaching excursion, took leave of her native town; and, braving the difficulties of a lone woman's journey, arrived at ———, as we have seen, sought out Mr. Clackworth, and, thanks to the jealousy of Miss Randalls, was conditionally enlisted as one of his corps.

The family in which Theresa, at Mr. Clackworth's instance, took up her abode, consisted of a couple who had been attached to theatres ever since their infancy, and had been introduced to the notice of the public as soon as they were old enough to cry the parts of the *Babes in the Wood*, and small enough to be covered by the substantial leaves dropped

upon them by the stage robin. They had, therefore, grown up without any other ideas or habits than those of the green-room ; and, happening to be thrown much together, had married, as much for their mutual profit as for mutual love ; and, with constitutional carelessness, had laughed and bustled their way through the rough and smooth of life, without encountering any very serious trials. Both of the pair had preserved their good name unspotted :—it is strange to see what fair flowers, neglected plants, growing in rugged places, will bear, — and, as strange, what sound principles and right thoughts sometimes meant in persons, whose lot Nature seems to have cast in crooked paths. ‘The little couple,’ as they were constantly called behind the scenes, were as truthful as they were merry-hearted, as honest as they were industrious, and continued favourites with the public, and friends with each other. She was the *soubrette* of the company, —brown, nimble, and familiar ;—he, in virtue of an expressive face, a smooth voice, and a careful pronunciation, was trusted with the

parts of lovers and heroes when no star chanced to be shining in the provinces. Such were Mr. and Mrs. Tyrell ; and Theresa soon learned to esteem herself happy in having found such a cheerful and respectable shelter as their house afforded.

She was not allowed much time for introduction to the world behind the scenes,—that woeful region of disenchantment to those who fancy the stage a fairy land full of courtesy and happiness,—or she was desired to rehearse the part of Juliet, to prepare for an early appearance. In the meantime, however, she saw enough to terrify one who had been educated in the strictest of strict households,—enough to make her thankful to creep to Mrs. Tyrell's side when the business of her own part was over, and tremble whenever she was addressed by a strange voice. And oh ! the numerous disgusts which she was compelled to endure, upon hearing the most splendid passages of her favourite authors, mutilated or debased by the incompetent or vulgar ! Then she was perplexed beyond description by the numerous stage practices and etiquettes with

which it was necessary for her to become familiar,—entrances, embraces, and innumerable other small matters of which she had never dreamed before. It was well for her that Mrs. Tyrell liked her, and, with her ready wit and cheerful spirit, helped her through all her troubles; enough, however remained to make her anticipate her *debut* with increasing anxiety. She began to wonder whether to be admired or hated was the greater trial; to have to endure Mr. Clackworth's old world courtesies, which, in the opinion of by-standers, tended to nothing short of a renunciation of the dear delights of bachelor-hood, at her feet,—and the insolent compliments of those patrons of the drama who were admitted behind the scenes; or to be mortified by the undisguised contempt of Mademoiselle Chèvre, who was provoked by the succession of one dangler from her train after another,—and to discover that the Randalls had left her sting behind her, and prepared not a few of her new companions to regard her with suspicion. Her beauty was a cause of envy;—her accent an object of remark; and then the daily

cabals and manœuvrings which she witnessed ! —But, to be brief, she received one morning a visit from Mr. Clackworth, who requested her to prepare for her *debut* on the following Tuesday, (the present day was Saturday;) Mademoiselle Chèvre being about to take her farewell benefit, and “anxious,” as the bills set forth, “to present the public with as much attraction as possible.” This arrangement was the result of an intrigue; but Theresa, herself as guiltless as a child, thought of nothing but the terrors of her impending *debut*, and turned, as Mrs. Tyrell said, “paler than white,” when that vivacious little woman bustled into her room, bearing a bill nearly as long as herself, printed in gigantic type.

AMAZING NOVELTY FOR TUESDAY EVENING !!!

MADemoiselle CHÈVRE

IN THREE NEW DANCES,

BEING POSITIVELY HER LAST APPEARANCE,

AND

THE TRAGEDY OF ROMEO AND JULIET,

THE PART OF JULIET BY

MISS AUBREY,

BEING HER FIRST APPEARANCE UPON ANY STAGE.

“ Give you joy, Miss Aubrey !” said Tyrell, gaily, when he came home from rehearsal, “ there is not a place to be had in the boxes on Tuesday for love or money !”

“ Mademoiselle Chèvre is very popular,” was Theresa’s answer.

“ Mademoiselle Fiddlestick !” replied he ; “ she knew well enough what she was about when she prevailed upon Clackworth to fix your first appearance on her benefit night. Had it not been for that, she might have danced to empty benches, you may depend upon it. Mademoiselle Chèvre has been too insolent here to have any right to expect much countenance ; and, as she is to start for Exeter on Wednesday morning, I have no doubt she would rather witness your triumph, than look at an empty box-sheet. These foreigners are all alike—perfect Jews.”

“ She is insufferably rapacious,” replied his helpmate ; “ Sir Harry Maristow sent her a most splendid ruby ring the other morning, in token of his admiration ; and, what do you think ?—she sent it back to him to have the ruby engraved !”

“ Nay, Nancy—”

“And Sir Maristow, as she calls him in her broken English, replied that he could not think of parting with the merest trifle she could do him the honour to give him, that he would certainly attend to her taste in the choice of a motto, and wear the ring for her sake.”

“Excellent ! most excellent ! Nancy ;—but dinner is growing cold while we are abusing Mademoiselle Chèvre. Come, Miss Aubrey, sit down—this pigeon is *for your benefit* ! ha ! ha ! ha !” and the three sat merrily down to their dinner.

The next day was Sunday ;—Mr. and Mrs. Tyrell set off to the catholic chapel, leaving Theresa alone, who was suffering from a severe head-ache, and was resolved to indulge herself with the dangerous luxury of a few hours of perfect quietness. The Fates, however, decreed that her reverie should be interrupted ; for scarcely had she enjoyed the contemplation of her sweet and bitter thoughts, for one poor half-hour, when a knock at the door startled her ;—a well-known voice, “ Is Miss Aubrey at home, alone ?” increased her perturbation, and the entrance of Mr. Clack-

worth, dressed in his sprucest suit, completed the measure of her annoyance. He advanced towards her, bowing and smiling very sweetly.

“ I cannot regret the malady which keeps you a prisoner,” said he seating himself, “ as it has also procured me the pleasure of this undisturbed interview. I hope that you are not *very* unwell, though Mrs. Tyrell, whom I met in Albany Street told me that she thought you were feverish. Permit me to feel your pulse; I am something of a physician.”

“ O thank you, Sir,” replied Theresa lightly, “ it is only a head-ache; a good night’s rest will be sure to put it to flight.”

“ *Only* a head-ache!—surely that is enough, my dear young lady, caused, I have no doubt by a natural anxiety with respect to “the great, the important day!”—Confess to me, are you not a little afraid? It was of this particular thing that I came to speak.”

Theresa owned to a little fear.

“ My dear and excellent young lady,” continued the manager, “ it was about this very little fear that I wished to converse with you, to consult with you what is best for our mutual happiness.”

“ Our mutual happiness!” repeated Theresa to herself,—“ whatever can be coming?—if my first appearance could be deferred, Sir”—

“ Out of the question, my dear Miss Aubrey — out of the question!—couldn’t be,“ if Heaven would make me such another world, of one entire and perfect chrysolite!” I should have a riot to a certainty, so much has been said about it. And besides, it would be a serious loss to me. I have been obliged to pay Mrs. Harrington of the Queen’s three guineas a night for the last fortnight: and that virago Miss Randalls, goes trumpetting over all the town, that I have engaged an actress whom I dare not bring forward—but I did well to get rid of her, the vixen!—No, my dear young lady, such a thing is not to be thought of.”

“ What is it then you wish me to do ?”

“ Why, my dear young lady,” replied the manager, with most alarming tenderness of manner, “ I have come hither on purpose to consult with you. I should be loth, I am sure, to throw any difficulties in the way, when there are none; most especially in your case: but this excess of your amiable sensitiveness

makes me a *leetle* nervous about your success upon the stage,—you must excuse my frankness on the score of my very sincere regard—so that, in short, madam, for I am not a man of many words, if you should be disposed to exchange the triumphs of the theatre, for the solid comforts of domestic life, I can offer you”—

“O Mr. Clackworth!” cried Theresa, rising very suddenly.

“Nay, my dear young lady, to tell you that you are admired, cannot, *ought* not to surprise you. I have seen *many* ladies, in the course of my tolerably extended experience, but none who combine so many—I am serious, my dear Miss Aubrey, and only tender my services to you, as a faithful and devoted partner for life, at this juncture, to convince you of my disinterestedness. I entreat you to give me a favourable hearing!” and he fairly sank down upon his knees before her, and took one of her hands between his own with a gentle violence.

Theresa, in spite of her amazement and vexation at her suitor’s perseverance, could not but feel a little diverted at the sight of the

prostrate beau. Had she known the vigorous siege which had been laid to the manager's heart, she might, perhaps, have set a higher value on the conquest she had made. However, her momentary desire to smile passed away, and she began, as connectedly as she could, to apologize and to deny—Mr. Clackworth's earnestness totally precluding the possibility of her imagining, for an instant, that he could be in joke. It was a difficult matter to make him comprehend the purport of her answer. She pleaded her inability to consider such an entirely unexpected proposition.

“Time, dear lady, time shall be granted you,” replied he, in a tone which would not have misbecome Grandison himself.

She represented to him that he might have mistaken a momentary fancy for a serious inclination.

“Excuse me, madam, though not *very* old I am not quite so easily deceived as to the nature of my own sentiments.”

She entreated him to spare her:—she could not bring herself to consider such a proposal, for one moment, she would not deceive any

one, and in this case, she was sure that she could hold out no hope.

At last, when his importunity had compelled her to use strong, almost angry language, Mr. Clackworth rose from his knee, with a very dejected aspect. "Well, my dear young lady," said he, "if it must be so, let us lay aside this matter for the present:—you *may* have better offers, it is true; you can have no more disinterested one than my own, I am sure; and I shall be only too happy to be permitted to resume the treaty at some future period, leaving you, in the mean time, to the unshackled exercise of your choice;—nor, after what you have said, shall I consider you are using me in the least disingenuously, should you form any other connexion."

Although firm in refusing such an ill-fancied suit, our heroine could not but be gratified and a little touched by the delicacy of this retreat, and she felt for the instant, how glad she would have been, if he would have consented to receive her as a daughter:—but she had already seen enough of him to know that, with respect to his age, he was touchy. She

was therefore obliged to allow him to depart, with nothing more on her part, than the most general expressions of regard;—and when the door closed upon him, felt that another was added to the list of her already too numerous discomforts. Upon Mrs. Tyrell's return from chapel, she was surprised to find her inmate flushed and in tears.

“Why now,—what is all this about?” said the compassionate little woman—“this will never do!—red eyes!—and *such* a pulse! Why, Miss Aubrey, think of Tuesday—you must get well directly—what is to be done?”

Theresa did not attempt to answer her enquiries, but still wept.

“It must be that old tiresome Clackworth,” continued Mrs. Tyrell, “I saw him coming hither this morning as smart as sixpence. What has he been saying to you?—nothing about Miss Randalls, I hope;—I was told that she had struck a bargain with Rugge of Exeter, and that she was seen yesterday, taking a place in the Delight. Come now, tell me what ails you?”

With this she sate down beside Theresa,

and so beset her with surmises and guesses, that, at last, the secret of the manager's errand was extorted out of her very weariness.

“O mercy!” cried Mrs. Tyrell, springing up as if she had been shot, and running to the top of the stairs, “O mercy! did I ever hear the like!—Tyrell!—Bob Tyrell!—make haste, do come up!—what do you think? that old bore Clackworth has been making an offer to Miss Aubrey!”

Sunday passed over with fearful rapidity, and, in spite of a disturbed and vigilant night, Monday seemed to arrive sooner than ever Monday arrived before. Theresa was persuaded by Mrs. Tyrell to accompany them to the theatre in the evening. “It is so lonely being left alone,” said that lively woman, “and who knows whether Clackworth might not take the opportunity of bolting in upon you again?”

If being left alone was dull, the theatre was by no means brilliant. There was no one in the green-room, save the necessary complement of actors and their attendants; in fact, it was one of those evenings, the recurrence

of which must form such a large item of ennui in every player's life:—when the house must be opened—but no one cares to perform his best, to the lazy handful of audience, that have lounged in from idleness, or because their places cost them nothing. The play was the *Stranger*, that most lugubrious of all absurdities;—it seemed interminably long! and Mrs. Tyrell, whose husband performed the part of the hero, began to grow cold and hungry, and would have gone home, “only they must wait for poor Bob,” so, sitting down listlessly, she fell asleep in the midst of some tale intended for Theresa's amusement. The candles which lighted the apartment were few and un-snuffed, and the huge dim shadows cast upon the walls and roof, recalled vividly to Theresa's memory the night scene of Mr. Lambwood's sick chamber, only two short years before, when her aspirations after fame had been first awakened—the night too, of Reuben's dream.

“This will never do,” said she to herself, and rising hastily, resolved to change the current of her thoughts, by watching the conclusion of the tragedy from the side scenes. As

she left the green-room, her eye rested, for a moment on the neat little figure of her hostess—who sat bolt upright in her chair, nodding her head—her eyes fast shut, and her mouth wide open—there was no one beside in the green-room just at that moment, save a squalid scene-shifter who was warming himself over the fire, nor sound to be heard, save the measured cadence of stage declamation, softened by distance. She approached the side scenes: “Every box full to-morrow!” said she to herself, casting her eyes dismayedly over the audience part of the house: “Why they will see how I tremble!—and tremble I am sure I shall, if there are any of *those* gentlemen in the stage boxes,”—then, she began to remember the look and gesture of Mrs. Siddons in that terrific sleep-walking scene: and, for the moment, thought that, to excite as deep emotions as she excited, she would cheerfully pass through the approaching ordeal—

There is another and a better world than this!

How strange that a sentence upon the stage, should so suddenly recall her thoughts *from*

the stage!—but it was not the words themselves, so much as the tone in which they were uttered, that seemed to startle her as though they had proceeded from the mouth of an oracle.—The voice was so hollow—so broken—so like the *real* gasp of death!—so different from Tyrell's usual voice!—and even while he was speaking, he fell so heavily—and lay *so* still!—A mist came over her eyes, as, dizzy with a fearful imagination, she clutched at the side scenes for support. And what stopped the performance? — was it — the prompter sprung forwards upon the stage. “A surgeon! — a doctor! — any one in the house? — It can only be a fit!” — became the general cry. In another instant an active young man had clambered across the orchestra, and was by the side of the prostrate man—he bent over him—there was a moment's dead silence—“Is it only a fit?—can nothing be done?” cried Theresa, rushing wildly forwards. “We must try,” was his answer, “but I am afraid it is too late!”

By this time the unusual cry and tumult upon the stage had penetrated to the green-

room, and awakened Mrs. Tyrell. For an instant she remained stupified, unable to gather up her scattered senses—then, the appalled spectators of this awful visitation of Providence, were thrilled by such a shriek, as had never before been heard within the walls of that house—as she staggered upon the stage towards the place where her husband lay, a lifeless corpse. Theresa was upon her knees supporting his head, (for they had not yet had time to think of removing him) and the wretched widow flung herself down beside him, reiterating her piercing and incoherent cries, which rung through the house, after the curtain had dropped before this tragedy of real life,—and the body of him so awfully summoned, had been carried into the green-room, where the suspicion that life was extinct, was confirmed into miserable certainty !

* * * * *

A week elapsed—and the theatre was again opened and lighted up, for the benefit of Mademoiselle Chèvre, and the first appearance of the new Juliet. The awful calamity which had befallen “ poor little Tyrell,” had suspended

the amusements for seven short days,—but they were now to begin again, and actors to play their parts, and audiences to applaud, with as much unconcern as if nothing had happened. This was a hard trial to Theresa, whose task it had been, during the last seven days, to watch the violence of the widow's grief,—as for soothing it, it was out of the question; you might as well have attempted to reason a storm out of its fury, as to persuade her to be calm and submissive under her affliction! and all that her friends could hope for her, was, that her distress would exhaust itself by its own intensity.

In the meantime every dead wall was again studded with colossal bills, announcing *Made-moiselle Chèvre's* three new dances, and the first appearance of Miss Aubrey — and with these were mingled placards with broad black borders, headed “Judgment on play-actors,” in which Tyrell's untimely death was alluded to, or as some said *improved*, in the most strong and threatening language. The consequence was, that, by all these events, the in-

terest of the public with respect to the evening's performances was carried to its highest point.

"Sir Harry Maristow, six places No. 1!" cried the busy box-keeper, admitting a party of gentlemen.

"Upon my word, here is a house, Clifton!" said one of them, taking a cool survey of the pit, which was crammed to suffocation, with upturned faces, all animated with the same eager curiosity.

"Ay—this must be a pleasant sight to Miss Randalls—"

"Why, the deuce! she is not here; is she?"

"Look yonder," replied Clifton, "immediately opposite to you, at that mass of scarlet and feathers—nay, you don't need your opera glass—yonder, between two men;—and laughing maliciously the hyæna!—she is mistaken, however, if she thinks of seeing the failure of the new Juliet:—I am told that the girl is amazingly beautiful.—Why! by all that is ridiculous!—a bill!—some one give me a bill!

—it can not be !—yes it is—only see—the part of Romeo, for this night only, by Mr. Clackworth !”

“ To replace poor little Tyrell, you know,” said Maristow yawning. “ After all, the old fellow makes up wonderfully well, if he were not so fat,—I fear we shall have a most melting comedy of it, when they come to the love-scenes ; but Clifton, look at that devil Chèvre,—yonder,—close beside the prompter, laughing as if she had never laughed before ;—gad ! I’ll take off my glove, and let her see my ring—’tis high time to put some bounds to the rapacity of these people !”

“ Jermyn don’t think so,” replied Clifton, “ look at him, close behind her, poor fellow !—waiting with her shawl ; and looking only too thankful to her for not laughing at him. He followed her to Exeter, you know—and they say, that he has bought up a hot-house full of forced flowers to shower upon her when she comes on in the last dance : and has hired six gardeners to stand in the flies with baskets full of his purchase.” A general laugh followed this anecdote.

“ I wish those young gentlemen would attend to the play,” growled a gruff cit in the next box, who had no idea of losing a syllable spoken upon the stage :—and sat between his daughters, two large girls, “ who looked so eager and delighted,” so Maristow said, “ as if they would eat the entire scene, Clackworth and all.”

“ A tough morsel he would be,” responded Clifton. “ Attend to the play ! why, we are attending to it, and furnishing a running commentary on the entertainment worth the price of our seats twice over !—Ah ! here she comes at last !—beautiful !—beautiful !—beau”—his words were drowned in the thunder of applause, “ which,” to borrow the phraseology of the press, “ greeted the trembling aspirant to theatrical honours on her entrance.”

Indeed a more lovely creature than Theresa Grafton had never trod those well accustomed boards. Her dress of pale blue silk did full justice to her perfect figure, and the blush which timidity, amounting almost to terror, had called up on her cheek, showed in brilliant contrast the one large white lily, placed amongst

her dark curls with such consummate art, that it seemed as if blown there by some Fairy tired of her cradle. She stood betwixt the Lady Capulet and the nurse, breathless and almost sightless with fear, nor did the reiterated plaudits restore her to self-possession. She would have given worlds to have hidden herself,—she felt as if she must burst into a passion of tears. But she controlled herself, advanced twice, and attempted to speak;—her voice seemed to have lost its tone. She constrained herself to make a third attempt, when her eye, glancing involuntarily downwards towards the pit, encountered in the foremost row of faces, strained with attention, an object which totally overthrew her remaining presence of mind—for, with a pleading gesture of her hands, which she then pressed convulsively to her eyes, she tottered backwards a few paces, and feebly ejaculating “Merciful Heavens!”—fell fainting into the arms of her stage mother.

She had met the face of her brother!—she had recognized those large wild eyes of his—those expressive features, now ghastly pale and thin;—she had seen him rise, and stretch out his

hand—and heard so much as, “Theresa! Theresa! the Lord hath sent me!”—she was conscious of nothing more.

“A madman! a madman! turn him out!” was the cry which rose from all parts of the house. The confusion became tremendous; while the Randalls leaned back in her box, enjoying the scene with all her evil heart.

“Turn him out!”—Reuben seemed disposed to resist this summary expulsion. “What!” cried he, with solemn vehemence, “when I have journeyed so far to do the will of Him that sent me, shall I be refused a hearing? shall I——”

“Out with him!—no sermons here!—out! out!”

But the excitement of his inward purpose, and the novelty and bewilderment of the scene, had already produced a dreadful effect upon Reuben’s over-heated brain, and imparted a ferocity to his resistance, which made his expulsion from that dense and angry mass of people, a matter of much difficulty. He struggled most furiously, and continued shout-

ing his wild anathemas and warnings, till he was fairly thrust out by main force, and given into the custody of a constable.

Fortunately for Theresa, the confusion had subsided before she was sufficiently restored to be led upon the stage again—but the vision she had seen had entered her soul, and it was with positive indifference to the presence of the spectators, whose applause was, if possible, doubled upon her re-appearance, that she mechanically resumed the business of her part.

It mattered not:—the tide of popular feeling had set in so strongly in her favour, that in spite of her coldness—in spite of the ridiculous appearance of a sexagenarian Romeo, “who looked,” as Clifton said, “like a Bologna sausage upon its knees,”—in spite of the incomparable flights and pirouettes of Mademoiselle Chèvre in a dance, introduced into the Masquerade scene,—Theresa’s success was undisputedly triumphant. Her want of animation was ascribed to an excess of sensibility—her occasional lapses of memory to industry, which had bewildered itself with

over-assiduity. In vain she attempted to rally her spirits,—the glare of that warning and almost supernatural countenance was before her, as clearly, as the sun is discernible to the shut eyes of those who have just looked upon him.

“ Upon my word, Bellasys,” said Clifton at last, weary of applauding, “ I never saw such a bewitching creature in the whole course of my life!—but what can be the matter with her?—she must have been dosing herself with opium.”

“ I hope she has not begun to follow the fashions of her predecessor;—but never mind, never mind!—she’s the true thing, depend upon it—I’ll bet a thousand to one upon her.—Did you notice the respectful distance at which she kept Clackworth?—and ha! ha! ha! that is good! Exeunt the Randalls and her familiars; being positively her last appearance this season.”

“ Maristow told me,” said Clifton, “ that she sent fifty men into the pit and gallery to hiss;—but what has become of Maristow?”

“ Gone behind the scenes:—I never missed

him before. They seem disposed to make us wait for the next act—come, Clifton, let us go too.”

“Thank goodness,” said the cit in the next box, “those noisy sparks are gone at last! Make a little more room, Lizzy, I am so cramped with sitting, and let us enjoy ourselves.”

“Pa,” said Lizzy, “do you think her apron’s real lace? — Gracious, Kate! how you trod on my toe.”

“Pa,” enquired Kate, “do you think there will be any more *rows*?”

Meanwhile the plot behind the scenes was thickening fast—the green-room was crowded with men, all eager to pay their court to the new Juliet—too happy to run for an ice, or a fan, to be permitted to open and shut windows—too ready to bring a perfect flood of all the *eaux*, from all the perfumers’ shops round about, in the twinkling of an eye, for the refreshment of the queen of the night. Theresa was certainly very ill, and feared she should never be able to go through with her part.

“Really, madam,” said the Romeo—“con-

sider my interest—the young man is in kind hands at this present moment, I can assure you. Pray, Miss Aubrey, *try* to be a little better!—this is quite sad.”

“Sad! you old raven!” cried one of the most assiduous of the flatterers:—“after such a *debut*!”

“Do you mean to insult me, behind my own scenes?” cried Clackworth, raising his cane,—“get out, Sir!”

“Perfectly right! very spirited!” exclaimed another, stepping into the post, which the insolent fop was compelled to vacate:—“Ah, Page, you blockhead, did you mean to be all night in bringing those ices?—Now, Miss Aubrey, allow me to assist you——”

“None, thank you,” replied Theresa, “I am better now, I think.”

“Cheer up, madam!” said Clackworth, “there are only two acts more. Hark! I doubt we shall be mobbed, if we don’t go on.”

“Only!” sighed the agitated girl—“well,—they will be over some time or other.”

“What a delightful creature!” cried Clifton, “and she lodges with little Tyrell, somebody

said. Ha ! Maristow !—and in this corner too ! you, the squire of dames !—Has Miss Aubrey been playing the Medusa upon you, that you can neither speak nor stir ?”

“Leave me alone !” was his friend’s laconic answer.

“With all my heart : I love the light, and will stay in it !—How—she is gone ! By Jove, what a cannonade of applause !—it’s quite sublime ! I’ll go back to my place. I suppose, Maristow, I shall find you here when all is over.”

“Maristow’s *bit* !” observed Bellasys, seizing Clifton’s arm, “come away ! or we shall be too late for the scream when she drinks the poison.”

The play went on with increasing *éclat* :—the crowd in the green-room received fresh additions every moment, from those who were anxious to hail the new star which had arisen so splendidly. Rumour, in the meantime, told how Mademoiselle Chèvre was in *such* a fury, and had cuffed her dresser till she was black and blue ! and how the Randalls had been seen to vanish into a hackney-coach, in a

paroxysm of wrath. The last act seemed like an eternity to Maristow, who still kept close in his corner—but it went over. Theresa was supported from the stage, more dead than alive, and as she must pass through the green-room to her dressing-room, the crowd pressed eagerly round her, each ready to offer some compliment or congratulation. But one forced his way to her side, as quick as lightning—a well known voice said “Lean on me! dear Miss Grafton, dear Theresa!—I will keep these people off!”—and the queen of the night fell senseless into the arms of Talbois!

PART III.

AFTER MARRIAGE.

“ And was she not vara weel off,
That was woo’d and married and a’ ?”

Scot’s Song.

AUTUMN was now fast waning :—but, in the richest district of the south-west of England, where that glorious season always seems inclined to dispute the supremacy of winter, the country had not began to wear that aspect of bare cheerlessness, which even makes the magic of bright days of none avail. The trees were yet garnished with a moderate clothing of foliage—the fields had not yet lost all their green—and the air, though freshened by a

tinge of frost, was not so sharp as to compel a couple of travellers, with whom my tale has to do, to journey with the windows of their carriage closed.

“ We are very near Maris Priors now,” said the gentleman, “ you may see its woods from the top of the next ascent, and if the leaves are thin enough, the chimnies of the old house. It is romantic enough to suit even you, Theresa. How surprised my mother will be !”

“ She will have received your letter, I hope,” replied Theresa.

“ Just, and only just !—last night at the earliest,—and as she is one of those deliberate person whose motions, compared with those of the modern world, are as one is to twenty-four,—we shall find her in the very bloom of her first astonishment.”

Theresa sighed—there was something about this picture which made her thoughtful.

“ Nay, now, you are not to go and terrify yourself with the idea of encountering a perfect petrification in your mother-in-law. She has strong, warm feelings, I assure you ; and if you find in her too much of the clock,

you must even set it against the superabundance of quicksilver you have discovered in me.—One thing, however, Theresa,—we sink the fact of *Miss Aubrey's* first and only appearance in the part of Juliet—you understand me ?”

Theresa did understand him, and made no answer.

“Are not those noble trees?” (they were now on the point of entering the gates), “Sir Talbois Maristow was a good fellow, after all, for he would not allow a stick of them to be touched; and that silver line, yonder, is a branch of the river, famous for its wild fowl.—You need not tremble so, my love. Remember, you are going home.”

The carriage rolled on, and stopped,—before the door of such a majestic old house as Theresa thought could have existed only in a romance. Maris Priors was a very ancient mansion, but in a perfect state of preservation; a sort of irregular composition of bell-towers, oriels, and gables; half Moorish, half Elizabethan. A long flight of steps, encroached upon by bay trees and myrtles, such as are

never seen in the north, led to the front door, in the shade of which stood that very venerable and somewhat awful person, Theresa's mother-in-law.

The Honourable Mrs. Talbois would have been a striking-looking woman at any time, or in any place, but appeared most particularly so, at the head of the establishment of Maris Priors. She was very tall and thin,—her hair, though grey, carefully dressed, and her cheek, although wrinkled, as soft and blooming as it had been at thirty. Her hazel eyes were large, and peculiarly quiet,—their expression, however, was the placidity of firmness, and not of gentleness. She was one of those inflexible persons, who never break their word, never yield a point, never lose their tempers—one who ruled, without appearing to rule : and being tolerably exempt from weakness herself, had no toleration in her mind, for the short-comings of her neighbours. She was charitable in the matter of alms, and devout after the formal fashion of the Lady Bountifuls of old times :—but her mind had been early narrowed by the prejudices of her station,

which she had found so perfectly consonant with her nature, that she had never made any attempt to enlarge the sphere of her perceptions or pleasures. She mixed readily in society, with those of her own order :—had built a church and endowed a school, but was a total stranger to the idea of extending her sympathies beyond her husband's estate, and the circle of her own family connexions—to each of whom, according to his nearness of kindred, she extended a proper measure of regard and consideration.

Such was Mrs. Talbois.—She descended two or three steps, advanced, and took Theresa's hands between her own, but did not kiss her. "You are welcome to Maris Priors," said she, in a tone of the utmost suavity :—"though my son has given me so short a notice of your coming, that I have not been able to prepare for your reception, as I could have wished."

She then embraced her son with great affection, and whispered a word or two in his ear ; "Would you not like, Lady Harry, to go at once to your own apartments ? Jones, attend your mistress."—So Theresa was led off

alone to take possession of her new domain : whilst her mother-in-law detained her husband to hear “all about it.”

The house within was as comfortable as it was picturesque, and stately without. Every corridor and chamber showed a goodly phalanx of family pictures—some panelled into the walls, grim and antique, and bearing such an inscription, as

Syr Dale Maristo, Ob. March 1st, A. D. 1444.

Preye for his soule.

some from the more recent pencils of Kneller and Reynolds. The splendour and extent of the mansion through which she was led, and the numerous tokens of family pride and aristocracy which met her at every step, at once excited and depressed Theresa. She could not help feeling as a nameless interloper into so noble and haughty a family, as one, whose presence might be thought to degrade that venerable place : she began to think of the suddenness of her marriage, after Talbois' long desertion, of which he had offered no account : of the distance of his mother's greeting—of the caution she had lately received to conceal

her late adventures :—then too, she felt wearied and exhausted :—in short, let no bride lift up her voice against her, as fanciful and unthankful, when it is told that she absolutely threw herself into a magnificent easy chair, with a tear or two upon her cheek.

A knock at the door made her rise, and dry them hastily. It was her husband.

“ Well, my love,” said he, “ how do you like your new quarters ? ”

“ What a question to ask ! ” replied his wife, attempting to resume her old lively manner ;—“ sumptuous ! magnificent ! a place to dream of, or to read of in a romance.”

“ O, my love, we are done with romance now :—you know it is all ended when the lovers are married. We have nothing else to do, but to sit down, and be respectable country gentleman and country lady for the remainder of our days.”

“ I shall make a poor lady,” said the happy woman, cheered by his gaiety,—and forgetting her late fancy that he was changed since she first knew him—and how strange it was, that after all, she should be his wife !

“ We must do our best,—my mother is the least in the world of a disciplinarian, and will be sorely disappointed if we are not dignified and aristocratic—she is already teasing herself to think how your circle of acquaintances is to be made select enough.”

“ Ah ! if she only knew”——

“ Theresa, she must *not* know”—replied her husband decidedly—“ she is already aware that you have no relations. As to any questions about family, I will answer them, and she is such a perfect Lady Pedigree that she is certain to catechize you. Had I married to please her, the wooing must have been carried on in a coach and six at least, and, after two years of parleying, the ceremony performed by special licence, in the presence of the representatives of at least six noble houses—I want her to love you ; and to make her do so, you must humour her prejudices.”

“ But, Sir Harry, no relations ! — poor Reuben”—

“ He is in kind hands—Dr. Barnes undertook to send us a weekly account of his health—and”—

“ Is Sir Harry here ?” said a servant at the door.

“ Wanted again ?—O the delights of being a country gentleman !” and so saying, he made his exit hastily ; while his wife returned to her easy chair to ponder on what he had said.

“ He is certainly changed,” thus ran her thoughts, “ since we met last :—I do not feel as if I knew him as well as I used to do—but, no wonder !—It is very painful, though, to have to begin by concealing my origin, and all out of respect to the idle prejudices of his mother. Will she receive me as a daughter after all ?—and how all this makes me feel my want of practice in the ways of the world !—And what am I to do ?—to confess my ignorance, is to make myself her slave—to show it, is to make her my enemy—and Sir Harry, through her. *Sir Harry* !—that I cannot think of my husband without his title ! it is very strange !—So then, I must learn in self defence to be worldly, and common place, and stupid, if I would retain my husband’s affections :—yet who used to declaim so loudly against

castes as he did ! His affections ! am I sure that I possess them now ? that I have not been married out of the fancy of the moment ?” and then the old theatre gossip about Mademoiselle Chèvre and her ring occurred to her.—“ How foolish this is ! to sit tormenting myself with such fancies—things may after all turn out better than I expect.”

The current of her thoughts was changed, by the entrance of the neatest of all abigails, who came to inquire “ if her Ladyship would not dress for dinner,” and the bride applied herself to the business of the toilette, in some little confusion. The respectful service of her attendant fluttered her ;—she became nervously alive to the scantiness of her wardrobe, but her marriage had been so sudden ! “ I shall make a poor lady !” repeated Theresa to herself.

She descended to dinner with a throbbing heart, and here her anxieties were redoubled ; there was so much state to which she had not been accustomed,—and her awful mother-in-law, she was sure, was taking circumstantial

notice of all those little uncertainties in her manner which were the inevitable consequence of the sudden change in her condition. Many a time before the table was cleared, did she sigh to herself, as she thought how comfortably the Tyrells lived, and of *the pigeon for her benefit*. But her husband was an exceeding assistance. He talked on, and filled up all gaps and dry places; and when the ladies rose from the table, insisted upon taking Theresa upon the terrace to see the house by the light of the rising moon, though his mother remarked upon it as “a very rash step;—Lady Harry could see every thing deliberately in the morning.”

Yet, in spite of all his liveliness, in spite of the adroitness with which he seemed to keep his wife and mother from coming to close quarters, Theresa began to feel *sure* that he was changed, and grown more worldly, though she was angry at herself again and again for allowing the least suspicion to darken so fair a prospect as was set before her. Alas! she did not then know that she owed her present exaltation, *in part*, to an immense wager laid

between Clifton and Maristow ;—the former in ignorance of their acquaintance when Talbois had been the Worralls' guest, having concluded that the splendid offers of the Duke of —— would outweigh the minor graces of the Baronet. The latter took the bet eagerly ;—it was the last trifle which decided his wavering resolution. The lady returned the Duke's proposals unopened : which proceeding, scandal said, had produced such a stimulating effect upon his simple Grace's passion, that he doubled his first terms, and went in person to urge his suit. Before he arrived at her door, however, the wager was won, and the bride upon her way to Maris Priors.

A month had scarcely reconciled Theresa to the magnificence of her new abode,—the strangeness of being, after all, Lady Maristow, to the awfulness of Mrs. Talbois as a mother-in-law. The scheme of life to which she was now introduced was so different from any previous experience—the part she had to play so prominent a one, that between her wonder and her perplexities, she was constantly in a state of low fever. Her natural independance

of mind was the first thing which returned to her assistance. She began to venture to maintain her own opinions, and, encouraged by the attention she received, to look a little more originally on men and manners than the Honourable Lady thought *becoming*. O that word *becoming*! it was pressed into service upon all occasions. Ere long, wearied out by the monotony of her mother-in-law's discourse, Theresa could not help occasionally trying, whether her old nature had, by disuse, become entirely rusted. Little arguments were the consequence, maintained on both sides with the utmost gentleness, but which tended inevitably to an alienation of the proud woman of rank, from her free-spoken, and not very submissive, daughter-in-law.

Amongst the many who came from far and near to pay their courtesies to the new Lady of Maris Priors, was a certain Mrs. Chester Younge,—in Theresa's opinion, the pleasantest visitor she had yet received, because she was the most original, and least ceremonious. She had been an officer's daughter and his companion in foreign parts:—she used to boast

that she had gone through as many adventures by field and flood, as would fill a novel,—and had retained, even to middle age, a spirit of adventure which the most highly polished refused to recognize as correct. She paid a very long call, and was so graciously received, that, in spite of the freezing looks of Mrs. Talbois, she repeated her visit before the bride had returned her first. The second interview was yet pleasanter than the former one had been. Their talk was of spectacles and public places, a dangerous, yet delightful subject to Theresa. Maris Priors was not far from Exeter, where Mademoiselle Chèvre had been repeating her performances with increased effect.

“You have seen the Chèvre, Lady Maristow?” enquired Mrs. Younge.

“I have,” replied Theresa, with a slight smile, as she remembered *where* and *how*.

“And is she not amazing? I have seen many good dancers in my time, but nothing to compare with her *Pas de papillon*;—nay, I was so entirely fascinated by her, that, rather than miss her last appearance, I positively

went to Exeter in our market cart;—now don't, dear Mrs. Talbois, *don't* look so shocked !”

“ Where was Colonel Chester Younge ? ” enquired Mrs. Talbois, gravely.

“ Where ? before me, driving ;—the carriage horses were ill ; and what else could I do ? I believe that the Boniface of the White Lion thought we were both of us crazy when we rattled into the yard.

“ O how delightful ! ” exclaimed Theresa, naturally.

“ Yes, she *is* delightful ! but I am told that all her sense lies in the points of her toes. Colonel Bellasys tells me that she is a vain, stupid, and malicious woman.”

“ Like all the rest of her class,” interposed Mrs. Talbois.

“ Pardon me,” replied Mrs. Younge, who loved a discussion, and did *not* love the Dowager ; “ *not* like all the rest of her class—as I myself have experienced ;—I met Madame Rombot often when we were last in Paris.”

“ Met her—a common dancer—in private society ! ”

Even so,—in the very first circles! and I found her one of the most charming and cultivated women I ever met. Now you terrify me, Mrs. Talbois, you look so displeased;—and I see my carriage coming round—*à la bonne heure*. Good morning, dear Madam, and forgive me, if you can. Good morning, Lady Harry; we shall meet often, and be great friends, I hope. I do not put myself out of my way to call upon all my new neighbours, I assure you.”

“That is a most absurd woman,” said Mrs. Talbois, when the door had closed upon her vivacious guest.

“Dear Madam, how?”

“How? Lady Harry! I am surprised at the question. She is decidedly the most absurd woman,—*not* of my acquaintance though,—for she never put herself out of the way to call upon *me*.”

“I am sorry that you do not like her,” replied Theresa; “for I thought I had secured one agreeable neighbour at last. Chester Grange is not far: that white house among the trees, some one said, is it not?”

“It is;—but I was never there;—Mrs. Younge’s proceedings are quite remarkable,

and such as I hope no relation of mine intends to countenance. But she is one of your *reading* women, and sets up for a character; and, like the rest of them, is extremely deficient in the becoming proprieties of manner."

"*Becoming* again!" said Theresa to herself, and bent down over her netting, to conceal her dissentient countenance.

"It is well," continued Mrs. Talbois, "that the class to which she belongs is a small one. Heaven forbid that it should increase! The admission of such persons into good society is one of the most alarming signs of the times."

"But Mrs. Younge is very amusing, and seems clever;—really almost the only visitor I have received whom I have wished to see ever again. Now only compare her with that proper, polite, empty Lady Henbury. Yes, I hope we *shall* be great friends."

This was throwing down the glove with a vengeance; and Mrs. Talbois took it up with all due solemnity.

"I am sorry, Lady Harry," said she, more

slowly than usual, “to discover in you such lightness of thought on a subject of such importance as the choice of your society. The grave, the polished, the high-born must, in these days, I know, give way to the free-thinking and the *parvenus*.”

Theresa blushed deeply ;—not with fear.

“But I hoped that *you* would not renounce the credit and dignity of associating with such ;—that *you* would not break down old barriers, for the mere sake of amusing yourself.”

“I hope not, either,” replied Theresa, earnestly, stirred by the emphasis on a word which she felt was pointed at her ; “but, I must say, that as far as society goes, I should prefer originality to dullness, and would rather meet with genius,—ay, even accompanied with rudeness of manner,—than the most courtly common-place personage that ever stepped out of a coach-and-four. I am warm, because I plead for myself. I shall never attain to that polish and experience in etiquette which is the appendage of birth ; but I can appreciate the other, and I trust I shall meet

with it. I warned your son that I should make a poor lady !”

Mrs. Talbois made no reply, and continued displeasedly silent, till the entrance of a servant, with some parcels from a neighbouring town, called down the one lady from her pedestal, and called back the other from the wanderings of her fancy.

“ Bless me !” cried the Dowager, examining an envelope on which something caught her eye, “ my son’s marriage ! On Monday, the 30th of September—ay, here it is !—how odd that I should have never seen it before !—to Miss Theresa Grafton,—they have omitted ‘ of Maris Priors,’ I see,—and it is not among the marriages, either ;—what is this next paragraph ?—upon my word !—”

Just at this moment, Sir Harry made his appearance with a brace of birds in his hand. The newspaper was laid down, and the game admired.

“ They are for Mrs. Chester Younge,” said he ; “ she complains that her husband is the worst shot in the county, and never killed or wounded anything that she knows of, save the

tip of his game-keeper's nose, which he shot off by mistake."

"A most improbable invention, and very like Mrs. Chester Younge," said his mother, sitting down again, and mechanically taking up the paper. "O—here,—‘*New Juliet*,’—this was what I was beginning to read, when your coming in interrupted us. Lady Harry, I am sorry to see you stoop so over your netting."

Sir Harry approached the table slily; but his mother held the paper fast in both hands, and began to read aloud:—‘*New Juliet*,—*On Tuesday last*;—what is the date?—Oh, I see, —Monday, October second,—‘*On Tuesday last, the inhabitants of our city, famed for its accomplishments, were edified by one of those exhibitions called debuts, which the uninstructed hazard through impudence, and the gullible public endure. The young person, who was selected as the probable rival to Mrs. Siddons, and who, we are informed on the most unquestionable authority, has studied the art of declamation in some Ranter's tabernacle, having been claimed as a run-away daughter by a mad Methodist, (whose performance in the pit was,*

in our opinion, infinitely better than the young lady's upon the stage)—this young person, we say, showed a degree of audacity in attempting to appear before a discriminating and critical audience, which it is high time that the press—that guardian of public taste—should expose ; and we are resolved, though ours should be the only voice lifted up, to condemn as flagrant a piece of imposture as ever disgraced the annals of the stage, to follow the course which we have hitherto pursued through evil report and good report, and to speak the stern and unvarnished truth.”

“That is very stupid stuff, mother,” said Sir Harry, interrupting her.

“Well, there is not much more of it—and there is something about Maristow at the bottom,—you shall have it directly.”

“Theresa, those balsams of yours are dying for want of water.”

“I am busy just now,” replied she, “I cannot attend to them ;”—and, as she spoke, looked up full in his face. He bit his lip, till it grew as white as clay, and stood with the

parlour door in his hand, uncertain whether to go or stay.

“Where was I?” resumed the methodical Mrs. Talbois,—“O, I have found the place—the plain unvarnished truth. *We beg to assure this young person (for we will not misuse language so far as to call her lady,) that we shall be happy to recommend her to a situation in the wardrobe,—she was tastefully dressed, we frankly allow. As to attempting the characters of tragedy—and O, could no less daring a flight have served her, than at Shakspeare?—or comedy,—or any part beyond that of chamber-maid in a farce,—it is as ridiculous as it is an impudent piece of presumption, which will and shall meet with the contempt and condemnation it deserves.*”

“This is too bad!” exclaimed Sir Harry, with an oath, banging the door behind him as he went.

“Upon my word!—My son is in a passion at something or other,—his new boots, perhaps.—Where did I leave off?—*condemnation it deserves. We are of no party—we are devoid of*

paltry prejudices, and have no interest in telling the truth, beyond the reward of our own consciences : but we may be permitted to express some wonder, in which we hope our readers will join us, at a rumour which has been noised abroad, that our old friend and favourite, Miss Randalls,—who has drawn tears from eyes unused to weep, as the injured Desdemona—who has made many a stout heart thrill by her terrific impersonation of Lady Macbeth, and whose Rosalind is before us as we write, as perfect a vision of female loveliness and intelligence as ever alighted on this earth of ours—has been discharged in the most hasty and ungentlemanly manner to make way for this baby-faced heroine. If this be true, we are sure that the public will sympathize in our honest indignation. While we are yet writing, another report has this instant reached us,—that the heroine has descended from the stage, having already played her cards so well as to take in a certain young Baronet ; we should guess by his choice, not overburdened with brains. We give him our hearty thanks, whoever he may be. Perhaps Sir H——y M-r-st-w, who was seen

in the green-room, entranced by the manifold perfections of the new Juliet, will be kind enough to charge himself with the trouble of conveying them to the happy bridegroom."

Mrs. Talbois laid down the paper without any note or comment, and then sternly and deliberately fixed her large eyes upon her daughter-in-law's face ; with an expression of such quiet and intense scorn, such as Theresa had never been exposed to before. But the bride was as proud in her way as the haughty woman of family :—and did not quail in the least, beneath her steady gaze.

"Is there any more?" she asked.

"More—Madam—more ! good heavens !" said Mrs. Talbois, rising :—"is there not enough ?—I knew that my son had matched himself beneath his rank,—but I did not expect this, I must confess ! You are detected, Madam !—your early history is revealed !—and you are not ashamed !"

"Yes, Madam !" replied Theresa, a sudden and most indignant expression lighting up every feature, "I *am* ashamed, when I see that birth and rank do not restrain their possessors from

employing the language of insult. I *should* be ashamed of having been raised to the station I occupy, if such narrow and ungenerous feelings were to take possession of me in turn. But I trust that I have learned better things—”

She checked herself suddenly, and rising, confronted her incensed mother-in-law face to face.

“I have suffered much,” said that proud woman, “but, Heaven knows, that this is the hardest of any trial that I have been called upon to endure! But such is the style of the day—and your language, Madam, is only what I should have expected from your education. I leave you to study your *tirades* in peace,—for I shall not sleep under a roof so degraded, another night.”

Our heroine’s indignation was now softened by such a feeling of concern as makes us pity the weakness of an inferior mind. She was by much too high-minded to retain any thing beyond a momentary resentment against prejudices and unkind language, which were not so much pointed against herself as against the

class to which she had belonged ; and endeavoured, if possible, to mollify the sternness of her mother-in-law, and induce her to change her resolution. She represented to her, that she was ready to pay her all reasonable duty ; that if she had spoken warmly, it was but from the excitement of the moment—that such a separation, on her outset in married life, would give her the utmost pain—that on Sir Harry's account—

“ Reasonable duty ! ” repeated Mrs. Talbois in a tone of the most quiet and cutting irony—
 “ so then, you *do* want my countenance ?—No, Madam ! I leave you, and for ever.”

And with a step as stately as Queen Elizabeth's own, she swept out of the room, and assembling her own servants, gave them orders to prepare for her instant departure. Her household, accustomed to nothing but the most measured and foreseen movements on the part of their mistress, were amazed beyond measure at her sudden resolution. Her maid ventured to remonstrate ;—her son, though very angry, besought her. The old lady was firm, — and hardly vouchsafed a reply to

his representations and entreaties. She possessed a jointure house at the distance of half a day's journey from Maris Priors, and thither she retired in sullen grandeur; declaring, in the most calm and resolute manner, that its doors should never be opened to her son, nor to the person, by marrying whom, he had inflicted such indelible disgrace upon an old, and 'till then stainless name.'

This sudden and public breach with Mrs. Talbois was a serious cause of unhappiness to Theresa; who could not help fearing for the future peace and confidence of a married life thus inauspiciously begun. But, for the present, her presentiment seemed uncalled for. The dowager's departure was the signal for all the gayer part of the neighbours round about, to come and pay their court to the lovely lady of Maris Priors, now a queen without a rival: and Sir Harry, who delighted in change, was entirely satisfied with the liveliness of his house, and the success in society which his wife obtained. She was so *new*, (her visitors declared,) so charming, so unspoilt,—and yet so cultivated; and then her taste was amazing,

her opinion in every art oracular ;—no wonder that Mrs. Talbois was envious of her beauty and intellect ! How narrow-minded of her to quarrel with Lady Harry on such a trifling ground !—how blind to leave so splendid an establishment for the dullness of Brandfield ! The tide of popular sympathy, then, ran along with her who had most to give : her words were repeated, her dress imitated ;—and those who were competent judges, prophesied, that let her be once seen in London, and she would be, without doubt, installed among the leaders and lights of the fashionable world.

But the bride was rather sickened than corrupted by this excess of admiration. She felt the falseness of the homage administered through her, to her house, and her gardens, and her parties : an old puritanical love of truth continued to cleave to her, in spite of the intoxications of her prosperous lot. Nor could she be diverted from lamenting the difference between her husband and his mother ;—and with the same sweetness of temper, which had made her so long and so patiently endure Reuben's harsh treatment, made one

or two unsuccessful attempts to be reconciled to the lonely woman, who had withdrawn herself to a private and monotonous life, and whose health, rumour said, was sensibly yielding to the influence of chagrin. The old lady, strong in the belief of her own consequence, imagined that her overtures were prompted by a natural want of counsel and support, and haughtily refused to receive them. At last, Theresa bethought her that a temporary absence from that part of the country might be of use,—and proposed to Sir Harry to pass the months of January and February in Paris, previous to commencing their London campaign. He assented readily, for he too, was by this time, satiated with the neighbourhood.

One person only Theresa felt sorry to leave, and wished to see again—the much reviled Mrs. Chester Younge,—the only person who had paid her no extravagant compliments,—and expected to receive as much attention as she gave. It was with mutual regret that the two ladies parted, and with mutual pleasure that they anticipated meeting again in London.

Before they left England, Theresa persuaded Sir Harry to permit her to call at the establishment in which Reuben had been placed for the restoration of his sanity. This was a retired and very pleasant spot in the quietest part of Hampshire, and at a distance from any high road. The superintendant, a mild, middle-aged man of few words, spoke most encouragingly of his patient. The extreme violence of Reuben's distemper had subsided, under the influence of quietness and medical treatment: and he was already so much recovered as to be allowed the free range of the garden and fields with which the house was surrounded. He seemed to find a child's pleasure in the open air, and the presence of natural objects, and as far as could be judged, was happy and undisturbed by any remembrances of the past. He would wander up and down from morning till night, singing fanciful hymns, and noticing any children, that happened to come in his way, with great interest. Dr. Barnes held out great hopes that he might ultimately be restored to a sound state of mind, as he had already showed

symptoms of steady pursuit, in wishing to make a garden in a small hollow, not far from the house, where he spent the greatest part of every fair day. Theresa expressed a most earnest wish to see him; and the doctor, though doubtful of the result of such an interview, consented.

It was one of those beautifully still sunshiny days which so often occur before Christmas:—such a day as disposes the mind to peaceful thought. Theresa, much soothed by so satisfactory an account, followed the doctor through the garden, and across a crisp meadow-field, from which the hoar-frost of the morning had not altogether disappeared. At the end of the path was a style, half-hidden among pollard oaks loaded with ivy.

“Close behind those is his haunt,” said her conductor. “I dare say that we shall find him very busy.—Hark! you may hear him singing. My people will have it that he makes his hymns himself—and I never heard them from any one else.”

They paused to listen, and heard a tuneful

though broken voice from beneath the further side of the hedge :—

Our God who speaks,—and wild winds blow,
 Who measures out the showers,
 And sendeth angels to and fro
 To deck the earth with flowers ;
 That God shall hear my prayer !

Our God beholds the winged seed
 Hid in its earthy cell,
 He doth all living creatures heed
 In earth or air that dwell ;
 And he shall hear my prayer !

“ You hear how gentle he is ; but we will not startle him by coming suddenly upon him.” The doctor advanced quietly, and called to him : “ Reuben, just come over the stile, I want to speak to you ; I have brought a friend to see you.”

“ Is it the gardener with the roots ? ” replied the voice of her brother, as, rising from his spade, he looked over the hedge. Theresa could hardly believe that the peaceful face, which gazed upon her gay attire with a pleased

and wistful look, was the same which she had last beheld so fearfully agitated. He wore his shirt collar open, and a cap of dark cloth upon his head which had been shaved, which gave even a boyish, and certainly not an unpleasing air to his figure.

“What have you brought this gay lady here for?—my garden is only a making. You might have at least waited till my tulips came up.”

Theresa lifted up her veil slowly: “Do you know me now, Reuben?” said she as composedly as she could.

“Know you!” cried he joyfully; “wait till I come over the style and you shall see!—why, Theresa,—have you really come to look at my garden?”—and he vaulted over the style nimbly and embraced her again and again. “How good you are to come and see me!—where have you been this long, long time?—nay, look at my dirty hands on your cloak; I am very sorry—I will go in and wash them.”

And seizing her by the hand, he dragged her hastily towards the house, showing such joy at her presence, as a child would have

done, “ You are looking very well, my Reuben,” said she fondly, “ I hope you are happy here?”

“ O very happy,” was his answer, with a contented smile, “ if it please the Lord to prosper my garden; and without his blessing all my labour will be vain. And did you say you were going to Paris?—by the time you come back you shall see *such* a change!—I will make an arbour on purpose for you to sit in, and call it “ Theresa’s bower ;” and my linnets shall build there, if the Lord pleases.—And so you are married too!—But here I am losing all the best of the day ; can’t you come back with me to my valley, Theresa ?”

“ No, my dear Reuben—I cannot—I must go now : but I will return again very soon.”

“ Not too soon—for I should like to surprise you :—give me another kiss,—do you say your prayers morning and evening ?—ah, I am beginning to recollect. . . .”

As he spoke, a strange frown began to darken his brow; and doctor Barnes, seeing that some chord had been struck which recalled unpleasant associations, made a sign to Theresa

that the interview had been long enough. The brother and sister again embraced and parted:—she, for the gaiety and stir of Paris, and he, with his heart and mind fully bent upon the little garden in the vale. But all that day, he would stop suddenly in the midst of his labour, and resting on his spade, remain for a few moments in some painful reverie. His attendant watched him with anxiety, for it was feared that this meeting might be productive of a slight relapse: however, he returned as often to his work with “Ah, well! I can’t remember—as the Lord pleases,”—and the visit of his sister, by the next morning, was only alluded to with delight and hope for its repetition “when he had finished his garden.”

We shall pass rapidly over the time spent by Sir Harry Maristow and his wife in Paris, and only mention generally, that from the time Theresa was thrown entirely upon her husband’s society, their paths might be said to begin to diverge. And was she happy? The negative may be fully and fairly answered. Not certain of the continuance of her husband’s

affection; not satisfied with her own state of mind; so many old land marks having been destroyed, so few new ones supplied:—she *could* not surely be happy.

One adventure, however, must be recorded which befell Theresa during the last week of their stay in that city of gaiety. She was driving alone down one of the Boulevards, when her attention was arrested by a carriage moving in the same direction, which contained an English face familiar to her. This belonged to an elderly young gentleman dressed in a lively cinnamon coloured coat, with a powdered head and a large nosegay of choice flowers in his button-hole; a lace frill to his shirt, and a celestial blue satin waistcoat. She was sure that the owner of all these elegancies could be no other than her former friend and admirer, Mr. Clackworth; but who then was his companion? It was some seconds before even her quick eye could pick out a face from the mass of rich furs which surrounded her throat, and under the panoply of her enormous veil; and when she did discover it, Theresa gave such an involuntary cry of amazement, as awakened

the attention of her neighbours—the carriages being now almost close together,—and the beau, calling upon his charioteer to stop, exclaimed: “Angels and ministers of grace! Anna Maria, love, do you not see your old friend Miss Aubrey, Lady Maristow?”

The *ci-devant* Mrs. Tyrell also thought proper to express her astonishment and pleasure in a scream. The carriages stopped, and their occupants shook hands with great cordiality; Thérèse secretly hoping that no evil chance would direct her husband that way.

“Well, really! this *is* a pleasure worth speaking of! I congratulate you, Lady Maristow, on the improvement of your looks,—if that could be.”

“And I, replied Theresa, “may return the compliment, I suppose, by. . . .”

“Now, my love,” said Mr. Clackworth to his wife, who looked silly and hung her head, “now, my dear love, there is no need to blush! she is so amiably sensitive, Lady Maristow, but we have just come over to enjoy ourselves a little upon this happy occasion. May I beg your address?”

“ We leave Paris to-morrow for London. When did you come ? ”

“ The day before yesterday,” replied the manager’s lady, taking heart to speak : “ you see, Lady Maristow, after my poor Bob Tyrell was taken from me, I was quite like a lost woman, and did not know what to do ; and so you know . . . ”

“ I understand,” replied Lady Maristow bowing good-humouredly, and thinking that the scene might now be ended. “ I am afraid that in Paris we shall hardly meet again. Good morning—Victor, to the Duchess Castellani’s.”

The carriages separated ; but Theresa could hear an importunate enquiry, wafted on the wind, which followed her, ending with “ address in London.”

“ No, no,” said she to herself half-smiling : “ I fear that cannot be ; what would Mrs. Talbois say ? ”

PART IV.

PARTING AND MEETING.

“We never care—secure again to meet.”

Crabbe.

“How I wish that Mrs. Chester Younge was in town!” said Theresa, with a sigh, one morning of her second London season, when she was sitting alone in her drawing-room. She had, by this time, run through the routine of a gay life ;—she had tried Paris, London, Naples, and exhausted the peculiar pleasures of each ; she had passed through the intoxicating atmosphere of universal flattery, and become accustomed to the state and glitter of the fashionable world. Her private purse

was always liberally filled ; her equipages among the handsomest in the Park ; her house the favourite assembling place of the noble and the dissipated :—she was, in short, as renowned as the most fastidious or apathetic man would wish his wife to be ; and yet was never so little contented with herself—so far from being happy as at that period.

She had long feared, but now she *felt* that she was becoming an object of indifference to her husband. Something of surprise and disappointment had early dawned upon her mind, during the first few months of her married life. So clever and so well-informed as she had thought him ! and how his understanding must certainly have retrograded ! She was in a mistake—her mind, like one of the flowers which open late, and come into full bloom at once, had gone forward with a speed far beyond the usual rate of developement. She had been forming original opinions, and observing and concluding, whilst he remained where he had been, willing to repose idly upon the fruits of other people's labour. He had, it must be confessed, with an increase of

fortune, contracted an indolence of mind, which might trench upon sensuality. But, as long as they were in motion, and he was amused by perpetual change of place, all went well. It was only upon her second return to London, that the splendour of Theresa's situation began to be dimmed by trials. Then it was that Sir Harry began to fall back into his old bachelor habits. His former set of acquaintances, remembering the snug cabinet dinners of old times, the moderate play which succeeded them—(they had by no means a turn for gambling—not they !)—the gay *petits soupers* at the house of some favourite actress or singer ;—all which delights had flagged when their gayest and richest supporter had married,—quizzed him most unmercifully upon his re-appearance among them. Had it been a match by which he was to have added a few thousands a year to his income, or to give a nobler title than his own to his eldest son, it might have gone less hard with him ; but to have taken an actress off the stage,—on her own terms, too, was by them ridiculed as the greenest of all green tricks ; and the idea of his proving a good hus-

band shouted down with choruses of laughter,—as though such an animal had never been seen upon Earth since the days of the Mammoth. It may have been gathered how completely Sir Harry had been married by chance ; it may be, therefore, guessed how much power was exercised over him by the raillery of his old associates ;—all such good fellows as they were ! It was a very proper thing, said they, for a man who could afford it to have a wife at the head of his table ;—*they* were all too poor to think of such a luxury ! and it was very correct that the husband should give her her uncontrolled way—by taking his own. So they reasoned, and so he acted. Lady Maristow had her own apartments, carriages, servants, everything, in short, but his counsel, his society,—above all, his love : while Sir Harry insensibly slid back into his ancient ways ;—the exquisite dinner of six—the hazard after the dessert—and, of late, an occasional supper, (such is the inconstancy of man !) at the house of his fair foe, Mademoiselle Chèvre (who maintained her reign by the strength of assurance) for all which good

deeds he was rewarded by hearing his friends say, some six times in the week, “that they had never seen a man so little spoiled by marriage as Maristow.”

But it was not in Theresa's nature to take life so easily, or to be able to cast herself loose of a tie with such indifference as her lord had set her the example of. She was alone in the world, save for him ; and, with the dismay of such as have only one earthly hope, perceived that its support fell away from her day by day. She loved her husband with such an affection as a woman always cherishes in secret towards her first hero of romance ;—she loved him as the friend who had cared for her unfortunate brother ; as the benefactor who had raised her from the chances of an exposing life to the certainties of a brilliant lot ; and though she bore with his neglect uncomplainingly, was not prepared to relinquish her claims upon him without many a pang of acute distress. She knew, as some modern author pertinently says :—“that lost affection was never scolded back ;” but she felt her sorrow to her very heart of hearts. It was the shadow that stood

between her and the sun—the sword suspended, over her head, by a single hair;—she knew that there was a point beyond which she *ought* not to endure; and dreaded, worse than death, the approach of the moment when some glaring infidelity would compel her to seek for protection elsewhere. And whose protection was she to seek? She had discovered that a life of fêtes and operas is not the life in which friends are made: her own tastes with respect to society were as far from being gratified as in the days when she had lived under Mr. Lambwood's roof. She had confined herself strictly to the circle of her husband's friends—a circle in which anything beyond drawing-room wit and genius sufficient to produce *bouts rimés*, was rarely found, and where lion-hunting was denounced as vulgar—that no independent action of her own might widen the space between their own interests; “We may perhaps yet be very happy together,” she would say to herself; “and I will not lose one chance by filling the house with people whom Sir Harry would dislike.”

Poor Theresa! her mind was withering

under the baneful influence of the atmosphere of the gaudy and heartless life she was compelled to lead. She grew restless and hysterical when alone, and the spirit and poetry of her native character seemed departed, to return no more. She had been taught tact by her affection, and would conceal this change of her lively nature, whenever chance threw her into Sir Harry's company :—these opportunities became very few and far between : and she was not allowed the blessing of children on whom she might have poured forth her affection, so carelessly neglected by her husband.

“ How long is this aching dream to last ? ” said she to herself one morning. “ and what is to be the waking ?—If poor Reuben had been——but there is no use to repine :—Sir Harry must not find me in a sullen humour if he should come home to luncheon. How I wish that Mrs. Younge was in town ! ”

“ No sooner said than done ! ” cried a fresh voice from under a veil ; “ your good Fairy has sent me at your need ! Why, Theresa, what a start you gave !—though I entered unan-

nounced, I did not descend from a chariot of clouds, nor even from a balloon ; so you must condescend to accept of me fresh from such a matter-of-fact conveyance as a chaise and pair."

Lady Maristow's surprise was equal to her pleasure ; and her greeting was warm, almost affectionate.

" Why, Theresa, how country bred you are still ! do you mean to shake my arm off ? or are you doing some penance to which my appearance is to put an end, that you look as if you would eat me ? You might have known how I have tormented the colonel for these six weeks past ;—‘ My dear I can’t afford,’ said he. ‘ My love, I shall die if I don’t get up to town this year,’ said I, ‘ and you will have to pay for my tombstone.’ ‘ My love, we can’t go in style,’ said he. ‘ My dear,’ replied I—you know, Theresa, it is always well to be moderate *at first*—‘ I shall only want my opera box, when I get there.’ ‘ My dear, I have no money,’ said he ; ‘ you are so extravagant.’ ‘ My love,’ I replied, ‘ I will be economy itself, if you will indulge me this once,—and save, till

the very rats and mice run about the house with tears in their eyes !' So I made him laugh ; and when a man laughs, you know, a woman is sure to win. I sent him off the first thing this morning to engage a box. What's your number ? "

" Mine ? " replied Theresa, " I have no box this year."

" Unworthy woman !—and why ? "

" Sir Harry is not particularly fond of music, and I do not like going alone."

" Unfashionable woman !—but he would enjoy the ballet, would'nt he ? "

Theresa became deadly pale,—but said nothing.

" But now that I am come, you must go with me—O yes—to see Grassini in ' *Il Ratto del Proserpina*, ' to-night—you shall ! and tell me every body in the house ; don't say that you are engaged."

" Sir Harry said something about Lady Dorchester's ball."

" Well, but you can go to the opera first ;—do, dear Theresa ; I have looked forward to this for the last six months,—if you will con-

descend to patronise two people so far behind the rest of the world as Chester and myself."

"Nay, that argument is irresistible—well then, I will—"

"You are a dear, kind creature, even in London. And now, to prove my economy, I must get you to introduce me to your *modiste*. I don't wish to bring you to open shame by my Exeter millinery. Come, the carriage is below, and the drive will do you good,—for, not to flatter, you are looking rather thin and nervous. Did I not hear you say :—'How I wish that Mrs. Younge was in town!' and now that she is come, you must go out with her."

There was no resisting Mrs. Younge's lively importunity. She loved and appreciated Lady Maristow, and had guessed her history from what she observed during a long autumn sojourn at Maris Priors, and from some rumours which had since reached her. Theresa spent the happiest morning in her company which she had passed that year.

The opera of 'Il Ratto' was, at that time,

a great favourite ;—the house was filled by a gay good-humoured audience, and the music went, as music sometimes seems to go, spontaneously well. Theresa's knowledge of persons was incessantly called upon by her friend ; and, though, as often as she looked round her to answer—"Who is that fine looking old gentleman with white hair?" or, "do tell me the name of that handsome dark man," she was tempted to sigh and wonder what had become of her truant husband, on the whole, she cast off her cares with tolerable success. The box was crowded with loungers who never failed to gather round Lady Maristow whenever she appeared in public ; but she preserved a manner so high and indifferent towards all of them—O ! how unlike the Theresa of former times !—that even the most insinuating or confident of the troop was constrained to depart for lack of encouragement, Mrs. Younge being plain, somewhat sarcastic looking, and, though perfectly presentable in her appearance, a person whom nobody knew.

"Really, Lady Maristow—for I dare not call you Theresa here,"—said she, "you queen

it beautifully. If you are not quite tired, pray tell me who was that last sublime looking person who made his exit so suddenly, and with a great sigh ?”

“ That was the Honourable Mr. Downe, not at all a favourite of mine, I assure you.”

“ *Down*-hearted he looked ; and I should not wonder if we read of his hanging himself among the dreadful accidents to-morrow morning—I hardly know how you will answer it to your conscience.”

“ Why did not you, then, try your hand at consolation ?”

“ Who—I ?—a nobody—your Ladyship’s humble friend from the country ! O dear ! don’t you see how all the men pass me over with a stare and a shrug ? What time or opportunity have I ? No, no—your London lovers know better than, when invited by the rose, to stoop to pick the daisy, as Hayley says. What ?—another ?—old enough too,” added she aside.

The new intruder was greeted with some cordiality by Lady Maristow. He was a Mr. Lumley, a middle aged man, and very plain ;

but so sensible, so gentlemanly, and so *sound* in his politeness, that Theresa felt she could trust him, and preferred his society to that of any other among her male acquaintance.

“What is this new ballet, Mr. Lumley?”

“The old thing over again, I am told—‘Phyllis et Amynte,’—I suppose Arcadian, with temples of no possible architecture, and young men and maidens that would be hooted out of the first farm-yard they entered to ask for a job. Excuse me, Lady Maristow, but you know that I am some years past the poetical age.”

“And are therefore resolved to disenchant as many people as you can;—now I defy you; I have half a mind to stay the ballet, and enjoy it, and believe in it, in spite of your satirical description.”

“I thought you were going to Lady Dorchester’s ball.”

“Thank you for reminding me;—yes—no I hardly know till I get home.”

“Can you find it in your heart to abandon me to my husband?” cried Mrs. Younge in a tone of mock reproach.

“ I must go,” replied her friend, “ and besides, from the time which they are keeping you in waiting, it seems doubtful whether they mean to give you a ballet at all.”

“ O it is only one of Chèvre’s tricks, I dare say,—this being her last night, she is more than usually tiresome. Only see, Theresa, how impatient the *pittites* appear. Pray Heaven, that la bella capricciosa have not sprained her ankle,—for the Colonel was only lured out to-night by an express promise, on my part, of her dancing a great deal.—Can you hear what he says?”

He was the manager, who had advanced before the curtain and addressed the audience thus :—

“ I am sorry, Ladies and Gentlemen,” said he, “ to be compelled to announce to you that Mademoiselle Chèvre has quitted London a few hours ago, and is now no where to be found. I have taken every pains to trace her, in the hope of being able to induce her to appear before you, but without success. Madame Dorival has kindly consented to take her part, at an hour’s notice. I cannot

express my feelings at being thus unworthily treated, but I hope you will receive with indulgence such a substitute as I am able to offer, and if you will point out any further way in which I can gratify you, I shall be most happy to comply with your commands."

This speech availed nothing;—the confusion in the pit increased in spite of the submissive bowings of the manager. Mrs. Younge's attention, however, was withdrawn from the wrath of the world beneath, by a strong pressure on her arm, and the words—"Come home with me, and say nothing," uttered in a voice whose meaning could not be misunderstood. She turned involuntarily round to look if the expression of her friend's countenance corresponded with that tone of misery, and was more startled by its proud and tranquil beauty than she would have been by the palest cheek or most agonized brow. At that moment her eyes and Mr. Lumley's met;—he, too, was observing Theresa with the most painful interest. "Well, Lady Maristow," said she, forcing a gay voice, "as Lady Dorchester is in the question, we had better

relinquish Madame Dorival ;—Chester, we are going home.”

“ Going home—and you miss the ballet, Sophia? What freak is this ?”

“ Ask no questions,” whispered she, suddenly—but ere she could complete her sentence, a name was buzzed about in the pit, which rendered further explanation unnecessary.

“ Are you ready ?” said Theresa, “ come then,”—and she took Colonel Younge’s arm with a quiet deliberation which his wife trembled to see. She *must* have heard !—

A group of young men arrested their progress through the lobby, who looked significantly upon each other as they passed.

“ Going away so early, Lady Maristow ?” said the sentimental Mr. Downe.

“ Yes, as the Chèvre has gone, there is nothing worth waiting for,” replied she coldly : —“ Good night !”

They were followed down stairs by a murmur, half of pity, half of sarcasm.

“ I shall ride round with Lady Maristow, and you may walk home, Chester.—Nay,

indeed I could not trouble your ladyship to set him down; let us not make any further delay. You are already late for the ball."

The two ladies drove homeward in silence: and in silence, Mrs. Younge followed her friend to her dressing-room. Her maid had arranged the toilette table, and lighted the candles, and was now waiting impatiently for the appearance of her mistress.

"So late as your ladyship is!—We shall hardly have time to do any thing. Will your ladyship please to wear your pink satin, or—"

"I shall wear nothing—I shall not want to dress to-night: you may go, Hay!—you may go, I say—go—go!"——

"Now," cried Theresa, bursting into a passion of tears, as soon as the amazed and inquisitive abigail had left the room:—"now I may give way."

"Yes—yes!—give way to your feelings!—I wondered how you could control yourself so long!—We are quite alone!—lean upon me, my dear friend:—this may not be true, after all!"

"It is true!" replied Theresa, in a tone of

the bitterest anguish,—I know it must be true!—I have feared something of this kind long—but this is even worse—and I may have been doing wrong all this time! I should have spoken to Sir Harry:—I should have entreated—but it is all too late now. God help me! for I cannot bear this! Promise me that you will not leave me all night, Sophia:—you *must* stay with me; I have no one to look to but you.”

“I will not leave you, so long as you wish me to remain with you. But can I do nothing? Is there no enquiry?”—

“None! none!—I will hear no more about it!—I have nothing left but to suffer—to go without a warning—without a word—even so little as a message—I have not deserved this!—What am I to do?—What is to become of me?”

Mrs. Younge endeavoured to comfort her, but in vain.

“Do not!—do not!—let me cry awhile!—you can do me no good!—no one can:—nobody can tell what wretchedness of mind I have already endured! How I loved him—and

it is over !—I think I could even have borne it better with any one else !”

She rose from her friend’s arms, and began to walk up and down the room hastily, venting her anguish in broken sentences.—

“ Had I given him any provocation, such as I see daily given by almost every woman of my acquaintance !—Had I showed him that I felt his neglect, and been fretful when he *was* at home—there might, *might* have been some shadow of an excuse !—and his mother too,—she will say that I am low born, and that he did well to abandon me !”

As she spoke these words, she took the jewelled comb from her hair, and threw it down scornfully. Her long hair set free, fell down to her knees. Mrs. Younge gazed upon the striking figure before her, now instinct with eager grief,—with tears in her eyes, and indignation at her heart. That Sir Harry could desert such a woman for that heartless and half-worn out coquette, was not a thing to be thought of without strong and generous resentment.

She left the room for an instant, that she

might dispatch a note to her husband, acquainting him with her intention of remaining with Lady Maristow all that night. The household was in a perfect uproar of surprise at the news of their master's flight with Mademoiselle Chèvre, which had, by this time, reached them. They were assembled in the hall, all talking at once.

"It is a shame," cried the housekeeper, "such a wife as my lady has made!—Not one of your good-for-nothing duchesses who keep an open house for all the rakes about town!"

"But, dear me," said another; "she must have known that he only left the French-woman just to marry her."

"And that," added a third, "was because of his wager with Mr. Clifton. "I told you how it would be, Thomas, long ago."

"What will the old lady say?"

"They say," replied the second speaker, "that she is past caring for any thing, and turning Methodist as hard as she can. I met Willis in Bond Street on Friday, and he looked as gay as a lark to have left his place. When she asked him why he would not stay, he told

her that he wasn't engaged to say prayers three times a day, and wouldn't stand it for no wages."

"She'll be dying suddenly some of these days,—she was always apoplectic,—and leaving those canters all her money."

Sick at heart, Mrs. Younge returned to her friend ; and was much touched by perceiving that Lady Maristow had already made some efforts to control her grief. She had washed the tears from her eyes, and arranged her disordered hair ; and had even drawn out her writing-table.

"Nay, Theresa, if any letters are to be written to-night, cannot you employ me?"

"I must write myself. I will write to Mrs. Talbois, and tell her what has happened, and throw myself upon her mercy. I will not stay here an unnecessary hour. I can go no where so properly as to her house, if she will receive me. Surely she will not have the heart to refuse!"

Mrs. Younge thought it best to leave her to follow her own plans, though she sighed to herself as she feared how ineffectual would be any appeal to that cold-hearted woman.

“ Will it not be the best thing I can do ?— and I will follow the letter by the next post, lest I receive a prohibition. What other step could I take? I have no one else to go to, and to remain here, exposed to scandal and worse—I cannot think of it.”

“ Come home with us,—or there is Maris Priors.”

“ No, Sophia, no,” replied her friend mournfully ; “ thank you, with all my heart, for your kindness, but it would not do. I could not bear Maris Priors now—or indeed any part of the country. We have been over it together so often, it is scarcely more than a year and a half since he took me there !—It would kill me.—No,—I must go to Brandfield : it is a miserable alternative, I know, but I have no other, unless,” and she laughed hysterically :— “ I take to the stage again !”

“ Dear Lady Maristow, do not speak so—it frightens me !”

“ I am very wrong,” said Theresa, “ but forgive me—because I am so *very* wretched !—I scarcely know what I say or feel. I think my reason is leaving me. Would to God it

would, if I might forget ! But do not look so shocked : let me go and pray,—it will do me good—I *must* go and pray !”—and she broke away from her friend with such a hurried wildness of manner, that Mrs. Younge could not but remember that Reuben was Theresa's brother.

She was absent for about half an hour, and returned much calmer. “ I am better now,” said she, “ I will bear this grievous trial as well as I can. Rest ?—no !—I shall never rest again !—at least, let me write first ; and then, perhaps, I will obey you and lie down.”

She then sat down to her desk, and exercising a strong self-control, though her hand, when least unsteady, danced over the paper like a feather, and hot tears stood in her eyes, ready to fall, wrote a few brief lines to her mother-in-law, saying that she was about to seek her for countenance and shelter.

“ Simple enough,” said Mrs. Younge, “ to have touched a heart of stone.”

She then, with a yet more faltering hand traced the following words on a sheet of paper, to be given to her husband, in case—but

what hope could she have that he would *ever* return ?

“ Dear Harry,

“ I have thought it better to leave London, than to remain there alone. In case you should return, I hope you will find me under the protection of your mother. I am going to her, for I know not where else I should go. Should you wish it, I will join you immediately, or in any otherway prove myself

“ Your devoted

“ THERESA.”

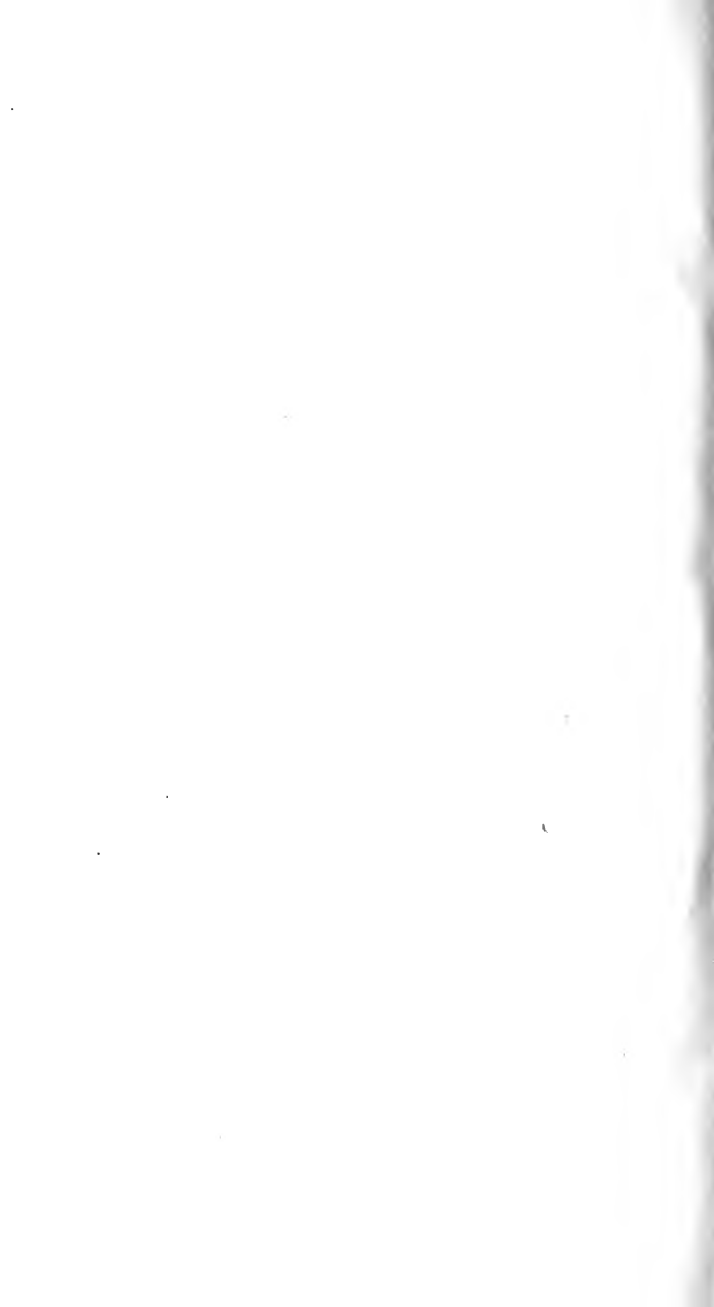
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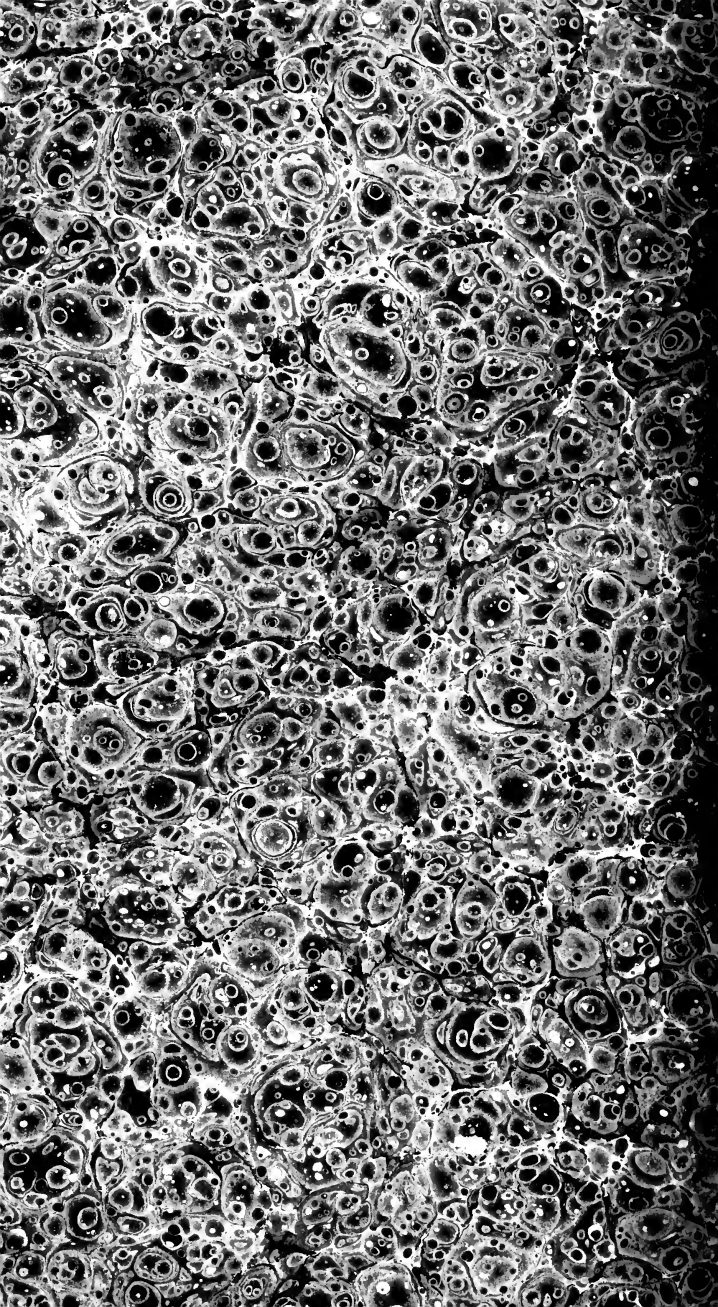
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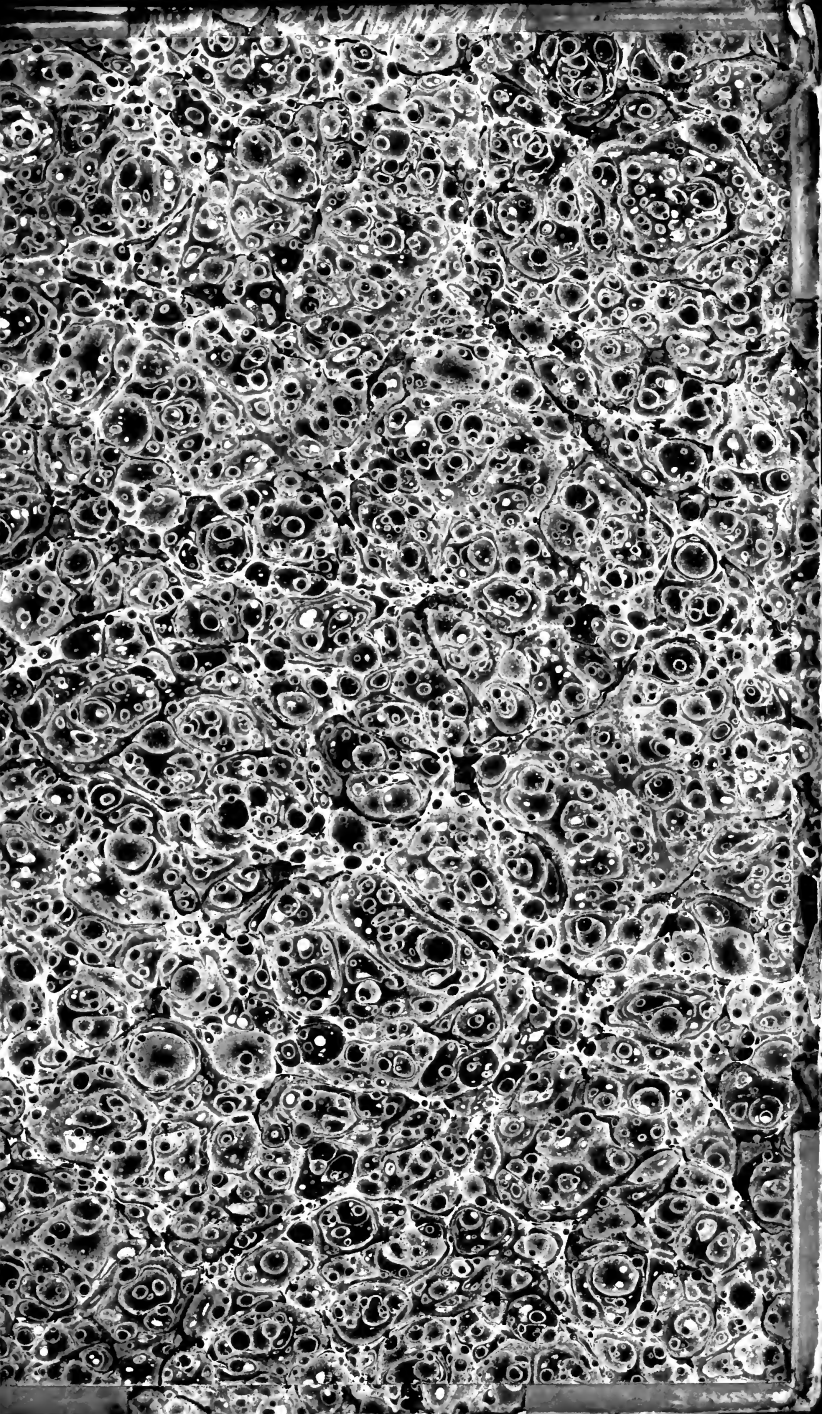
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